

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 1, 1920.

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“ 3 ”

OR THE TEN TREASURE HOUSES OF THE TARTAR KING

BY EDWARD R. MONTGOMERY

AND
OTHER
STORIES



Up through an opening in the stone floor, which until now I had not noticed, Sam Summers came bounding. Sam always carried two revolvers. He had them now. With one in each hand, he let drive at the jackals.

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Or, THE TEN TREASURE HOUSES OF THE TARTAR KING

By RICHARD R. MONTGOMERY

CHAPTER I.—Caught in Khiva.

“That settles it. You two die when the bell strikes!”

“But, my dear general,” said I, “you are laboring under a vast and terrible mistake.”

Was he really a general, that pompous Russian official who thus pronounced those words intended to cut short my mortal career? I don’t know to this day. I had learned this much—in the Asiatic Russian service every man is a general, just as every man is a colonel in the Southern States.

“Why a mistake? Why a mistake?” he frowned down at me from the throne of the old Khans of Khiva, upon which he was comfortably seated, with a smoking samovar on the table beside him.

“I am no Englishman; no more is my friend,” he boldly asserted.

He snapped his fingers contemptuously, exclaiming:

“Gentlemen, pardon, but you lie—simply lie!”

Sam Summers bristled up at once. Sam was my friend, understand, and stood there beside me.

“You wall-eyed old snoozer, I only wish I had you outside! Wouldn’t I make you swallow your cockery teeth along with them words!”

Thus said Sam in a whisper. Fortunately no one heard it but me.

“You are mistaken, general,” I repeated. “I am simply a New York reporter. My name, as I told you, is Philip Winters. My companion is Sam Summers, also a reporter. We are Americans. We were sent to Khiva to report the completion of Russian railroad enterprise in Central Asia. We are traveling on a special pass signed by the Czar.”

This story was written before the world war, which changed the government of Russia.

The general winked and blinked, and took a drink of tea from the samovar.

“Gentlemen, it’s no use,” he said, in that same very good English. “That’s your story. Now hear mine. You are caught prying into the affairs of the Russian Military Government in Central Asia.”

“You claim to be Americans, to have a pass, to be reporters, and all the rest. Is it so?”

“You, Mr. Summers, have the arms of Great Britain tattooed on your breast——”

“Done when I was a child by an English sailor, general. I never was in England in my life.”

“Silence!” roared the big general.

“You talk about your pass from the Czar, but you can’t produce it,” he continued.

“Because it was taken from me on my arrest by one of your men,” I interrupted.

“Silence! The man Summers cannot prove that he is an American. I rather guess, gentlemen, you’ll have to abide by my sentence and die when the bell strikes.”

We were not allowed a chance to speak after that. The guards seized us and we were hurried to a rat-ridden cell under the palace of the Khivan Khan. Another thing I wanted to know was why this petty despot in Central Asia used such expressions as “that settles it” and “rather guess.”

“Who am I?”

Was that the question I heard some one ask? A few words will explain. I’ve already mentioned my name and the fact that I was a reporter. I came to Khiva because my paper sent me. Sam Summers was my assistant. He came because I picked him out from among the boys of the reportorial room as the fellow I thought best adapted to the work. The year of this happening I am pledged to keep secret. I can only say that it was at the time the Russians had gobbled up the ancient Khanate of Khiva in Central Asia, and were pushing their railroad toward Samarcand as rapidly as possible, with an eye on British India. Of all this the English government was horribly jealous. I own it now, we were working in English interests. I suspected it, but didn’t actually know it. No Englishman could possibly get into that country. Our report would have been published in all the London papers simultaneously with its appearance in New York. So much for explanation. Let me simply add that we got into Khiva, Sam Summers and I, and prowled around for a week disguised as Russian engineers.

But we were caught at last, and hurried before the commanding officer of the Russian military government in Khiva. That is the man I called general. He condemned us to death at the striking of the bell. Somewhere around midnight, while Sam and I sat on the floor smoking cigarettes and discussing our situation, we were startled by a curious rattling sound within a yard of my boot soles, close down on the floor. At the same instant a light seemed to shoot up from the floor. Then to my infinite amazement I saw the general coming up through a trap-door, carrying a lantern in one hand and a big basket in the other. Russian bigbugs don’t go out of their way to hunt up poor prisoners without a

meaning. And the general's first words confirmed my views.

"Boys, are you here?"

"All here, and as full of Yankee pluck as ever, general," I replied.

He trod on something, and one of the big floor stones which had moved out of place before, moved in it again, and the trap closed.

"There! Now I can talk," he said.

He shook hands with me. Then he shook hands with Sam.

"What paper is it, boys—Herald, Sun, Times, or World?" he asked.

His eyes twinkled as I told him.

"Do you know Ben McNulty?"

"Very well, indeed," said I.

"And Mike Hennessy?"

"Of course."

"No doubt you've had many a ball in——" he mentioned a noted drinking saloon in Nassau street, New York, a place every newspaper man knows.

"I don't drink, myself, general, but I've been in there many a time. Of course you've lived in New York from the way you talk?"

"Well, I should smile. Only town on the face of the earth fit to live in, boy."

We talked half an hour, and then he said:

"My orders are to kill every newspaper man who managed to get into Khiva. You were doomed before you left St. Petersburg—see?"

We saw.

"Is there no help for us?" I asked.

"Why, of course. That's why I'm here. Boys from the —— office be killed by me? Never! Listen. To save you openly is impossible. My own life would pay the forfeit. This is my plan: There is a Russian inventor here with a patent electric carriage, made for running on the Khivan desert; storage battery principle. In an hour's time he starts for the Oxus and you go with him—it's all arranged."

"But how——" I began, when he broke in with:

"Not a word. There is a secret passage here right into the room where the machine is kept. He will see you through to Bokhara. From there you will be transferred to India. Take these papers. They are written in Arabic, and addressed to my friend the Emir of Bokhara. Now, boys, you go, and as you love your lives, never show your noses in Khiva again."

We swore by the Big Boot in Chatham street that we never, never would. He conducted us down the trap and through the secret passage into a room where stood a vehicle looking a good deal like a hansom cab, with a seat on top, and a wheel lever near the seat, and a big lot of complicated machinery down the back, which I can't attempt to describe. He introduced us to a gentleman in the dress of a Russian officer. He shook hands furiously and offered us his cigarette case. The general put the basket in the carriage and we got in after it. Then he closed the door, leaving us only a little window about ten inches square for light and air.

"Now, then, you go," he called in through this window. "When the bell strikes, and that's inside of five minutes, two guards will come for you. They mean to take you to the palace yard and shoot you. But—ha. ha! They won't find you there."

That's the last we ever saw or heard of the general. There was a rattle and the sound of opening doors. Suddenly a heavy bell tolled once.

"The bell, by Jove!" murmured Sam.

"Hold on! Here we go!" said I.

For at the same instant the machine started. We were rumbling through the streets of Khiva bound for a land wholly unknown to the civilized world.

CHAPTER II.—The Carriage and the Balloon.

We ran for about two hours without stopping. Halting then, the door was opened by the inventor. We stepped out and found ourselves at a small building standing on the bank of a muddy stream, where several soldiers with lanterns came out to greet us.

"Oxus—Jaxastes!" said our guide, pointing, and I knew that we were about to cross the river made famous by Alexander the Great.

It is the river marked Amoo on modern maps. There was a rude bridge here, built by the Russians. We had a drink of vodka with our strange protector, and lighting fresh cigarettes all around, he bade us enter the carriage again. We obeyed. He slammed the door, and we heard him scramble to his seat. Then we rolled over the bridge, and away we went across the desert. For about an hour nothing happened. The motion of the carriage was very easy. I went to sleep. So did Sam. All at once I was awakened by the sudden stopping of the carriage and the report of a gun. Crack! Crack! Two other shots followed, and there was some shouting.

"Thunderation! We have been attacked by those infernal Tekke-Turkomans!" cried Sam.

We flew faster and faster. The carriage rumbled and shook until I felt sure it would fall apart. It's no use trying to disguise the fact, we were horribly scared.

"By gracious, I must know the truth, Phil!" said Sam, at last.

I knew what he was thinking of, for I was thinking of the same thing—had been for ever so long. Had our friend been killed by the Tekke-Turkoman? Was this infernal electric carriage running away? Reader, it was so. Sam did it. At the risk of having his head taken off, he managed to thrust it through that little hole while I held his legs. He gave me a kick—the specified signal—and I pulled him back.

"Phil, it's a fact."

"No one there?"

"Not a soul."

I was wet with perspiration from head to foot. What was to be done? Evidently the poor wretch had been shot and the machine was running without a guide. We thought of and discussed a thousand ways to stop it. None of them have worked, in all probability. While we were still discussing, the thing stopped of its own accord.

We descended from the machine.

"Thunderation! What sort of a shop is that?" cried Sam, while I was looking with regret at the inventor's empty place. Right before us was a small, square building, built of rough stone, with what appeared in the darkness to be a huge

dome on top. The building stood in the midst of the desert. We brought in the basket and lit a lantern, which was among the useful things which the general had provided for us. What we saw was just four walls and a flight of stone steps leading up.

"Let's go upstairs into the dome," said Sam. "It's mysterious enough that this building should be alone here in the desert."

"It's a tomb—a mosque and tomb combined," said I learnedly, for I had read of such things somewhere or another.

There wasn't much mosque about it. At the top of the steps we passed through a trap-door and came into a circular inclosure. There was a canvas ceiling above and canvas sides all around with seats, but we saw nothing of the dome.

"This is strange," said Sam. "We seem to be cut off from the top."

There was a rope hanging down over the seat which went through the canvas outside. As I spoke I caught hold of it and gave it a smart pull.

"Holy smoke, we're going!" roared Sam. "By the marlinspike of Moses! It's a balloon!"

There was a shake and a tremble, then a rushing sound. I seized the canvas above the seat and tore it aside. The sight was tremendous. Forty feet or more below us was the electric carriage and the little building we had taken for the mosque. We were ascending with amazing rapidity.

CHAPTER III.—Wrecked on the Butte.

One of the first things we did when we knew the truth was to tear away the canvas. We found that it rolled right up by merely pulling certain strings, which were easily discovered. Then we had it all plain enough. We were in a car. Above us was the body of a huge balloon. The canvas had simply served as a sort of awning to protect the car. Far above us, suspended among the ropes, was another and smaller car of wicker work, like our car. The usual valve ropes were there, but they came down into the upper car. And the strangest part of it all was that we soon found out that they were being controlled by invisible hands. It was amazing. We roared and yelled and shouted ourselves hoarse, but could obtain no answer. We gave it up at last and submitted to fate. Then Sam went to sleep. After that I took my turn. And now that I have explained the situation, I will tell what I saw in one word after awakening. Sand! That's all. We were moving over the great desert south of the Sea of Aral. Beyond was Bokhara, Khokan and Samarcand.

"Say, Phil, I give it up," said Sam suddenly, interrupting my meditations.

"What?"

"The fellow up above."

"Haven't you routed him out yet?"

"No, and I've yelled myself hoarse. I've seen his hands, though."

"Black or white?"

"Black!"

"That's bad!"

"Look! There they are now!"

Away up among the ropes projecting above the

car I could distinctly see two black hands pulling on a rope.

"Say, Phil, look there!" cried Sam suddenly, fifteen or twenty minutes, or perhaps half an hour, after that.

I looked. It was a tall pillar of rock rising directly out of the desert.

"He's heading for that, whoever he is," said Sam.

We were making fine headway, and in a direct line with the top of the butte, when all at once I heard a wild yell, and over the side of the basket the unknown came. He was a large man, with dark features, but not black; long, straight, black hair hanging under a snow-white turban, and regular coat and trousers below that.

"An English spy from India!" I exclaimed.

"A Hindu," said Sam, in the same breath.

We understood the use of the balloon now. Doubtless this man had come over from Afghanistan to spy out the operations of the Russians, but what was the matter with him now? He had a rope attached to his waist, and was clinging to it with both hands. Evidently the rope was fastened to a pulley, for he came down as easily as possible, and dropped into our car.

"Gentlemen, I greet you!" he exclaimed, with a hurried salaam. "I—I fear we are lost."

Raising his hand, he pointed off upon the desert.

"A simoon! by the eternal!" cried Sam.

There was the whirling column of sand coming toward us. But by all that's terrible, I want you to understand that five minutes later I made sure he was right. The simoon struck us! We could not see the balloon—we could not see each other. On, on and still on we flew at an appalling speed, the balloon making the most stupendous gyrations. I am at a loss to know why we were not thrown out. I thought the end had surely come when suddenly the balloon struck against something hard like a wall.

"It is the butte!" came over me.

Pulling myself together, I ventured to stand upright, clinging to one of the car ropes. There was the rock. The balloon was thrashing against it in the most fearful manner, when I put out my hand and grasped a small tree which had found root in some crevice, Heaven knows how.

"Jump! Jump onto the rock!" I shouted.

Sam went first—the Hindu followed. They seized the thrashing car and managed to steady it for a single instant. In that instant I went too, landing on a narrow ledge away from which the balloon shot like lightning the instant they let go.

"There's a hole here!" roared Sam. "We shall be choked to death if we remain here. I'm going in."

The opening ran slanting down into the rock; it was about as big around as a man's body. But the Hindu had spied it before we did and had already gone in. Sam followed. I came last.

Wonderful to relate, all in a moment I saw the sand vanish and the sun came streaming out.

"Ladders!" yelled Sam. "Ladders leading to the bottom!"

The Hindu was already descending.

Down went Sam and down went your humble servant—we three.

"This is all very fine, but where do they lead to?" I cried.

At the same moment I heard a rattling sound above me.

My eyes rested upon a big bronze handle set into the solid rock.

A dismal yell from the Hindu woke the echoes of that strange perpendicular tunnel.

"Great Godfrey, we are lost!" shouted Sam.

But I seized the bronze handle with both hands and held on desperately.

Sam seized my legs.

All this in the twinkling of an eye, so to speak.

You see, the ladders all gave way at once and went crashing down into the darkness below us.

Merciful powers!

Will I ever forget the horror of that moment? But the horror of the next was greater still.

As I clutched the handle, those two poor wretches depending upon me for support, the big, square block of stone to which it was attached came moving out of the wall.

What could save us now?

There we hung.

Heaven help us!

The stone was moving!

And through the hole above the sunlight came streaming down upon my devoted head.

"Lost! Lost! Lost!"

I heard Sam Summers speak these words as I grasped the bronze handle.

Odd!

That he should say "lost! lost! lost!" just then—very odd.

Why?

Because at that very instant I felt like crying out:

"Saved! saved! saved!"

You see, the bronze handle pulled out and the rock came after it.

There we hung.

We were attached to one another.

Sam had my legs, the Hindu had Sam's legs, while below was a bottomless abyss.

No wonder my poor friend cried "lost! lost! lost!" But—

"Well, that stone was on hinges, that's all!

It even had bronze braces on the sides.

It opened just so far and then stopped.

Luckily I held on, and the rest held on to me.

Thus for a moment the danger passed.

The only danger had been in letting go.

The Hindu saw the situation.

"Hold on! Hold on!" he shouted.

"I'm holding on, you bet!" I called back. "But what are we going to do?"

"Pull yourself up, Phil! Pull yourself up!" Sam yelled.

Could I pull myself up with two full grown men hanging onto me?

Not much!

Only that I had done a big lot of practicing at all sorts of athletics in my New York club, I couldn't have stood it as it was. The Hindu knew that.

"Hold! I will ascend!" he cried.

I grasped his meaning.

A moment later he was grasping my legs.

He came up over Sam like a monkey.

Then he shinned up me, so to speak.

The next thing I knew his dusky nibs was standing on the big stone I thought was going to fall on my head.

He leaned down and hollered to Sam—excuse me saying "hollered," please. I always believe in a fellow writing as he talks.

"Come up!" he hollered. "Come right up!"

"Yes; and be pretty blame quick about it if you want me to hold on!" I gasped.

Then Sam Summers shinned up your humble servant.

The Hindu bent down with extended hands to help him. The blazing sun struck down through the hole on the Hindu's head.

It made a striking picture.

But I was filled with a horrible fear lest I should have to let go and send us all to everlasting smash.

But I didn't.

Sam made the rock in a moment.

"How does she bear?" I hollered.

"She'd bear a dozen men," replied Sam. "There's no more give to it than to the Brooklyn Bridge."

Down came four strong hands to help me.

Next thing I knew I was on the rock beside them.

For the time being we were saved.

And what next?

Why, next we undertook to find out where we were.

The opening of the stone had revealed a passage leading right into the solid rock which formed the butt.

"We have the choice of following our noses or committing suicide," said Sam in his graphic way.

"Think not to kill yourself, sahib," said the Hindu gravely. "There is a hereafter. Believe me, the lot of the suicide in the great hereafter is very hard."

This Hindu was all politeness.

A French dancing master could not touch him.

He made a profound bow when Sam now asked his name, and answered that it was Rumjidee Jam. I had to laugh right out at the expression of Sam's face. I do not believe he ever heard a Hindu name before.

"Rum which?" he gasped.

"Rumjidee Jam, sahib."

"Sahib, we are pleased to meet you, even under these trying circumstances. I am Phil Winters, of New York. My friend is Sam Summers, of the same place. You are from India, I presume?"

"Jahore, sahib. I am a colonel in her majesty's service. Am I speaking to men in the Russian interest?"

"Not at all," I declared. "Quite the other way."

"Very good. Fate has thrown us together. Let us be polite to one another."

"Mr. Jam," said I, "you know this part of the world better than we do. Tell us——"

"Pardon; Rumjidee Jam is my name."

"Excuse my ignorance. I was about to ask your advice as to the proper course——"

"It is undoubtedly to follow that opening opposite us."

"But it is pitch dark."

"No. See?"

I give you my word it's true. He had a detec-

tive's dark lantern in his pocket, and with it he piloted us into that dark hole. We went quite a distance before there was any change. Here and there were great pictures sculptured in the rock. Rumjidee Jam flashed his light upon them and showed us battle scenes and hunting scenes, and other scenes, the meaning of which, I'm not ashamed to own, I was too ignorant to comprehend.

"These things," remarked Rumjidee Jam, "must be very, very old."

"How do you judge?" I inquired.

"Not since the dawn of history has this country been inhabited except by the barbarian Turko-mans," was his reply.

And he had hardly spoken it when the passage came to an end and there we were in a sizable room. Along one of the walls were ranged three stone chests or bins, the lids of which seemed to have been smashed in with big stones—the stones lay on the floor beside them. Stretched out near the middle chest was a human skeleton, the bones bleached as white as snow. Exactly in the center of the room was a square opening in the floor, close to which stood a sort of car with an iron chain attached. There was a track running down into the hole which was slanting—an inclined plane. The track extended up on the floor and the car stood upon it.

"Great Godfrey!" shouted Sam, as the light was flashed upon the car.

The car was heaped up with bars of something yellow and glittering. It was gold! Sam leaped upon the car in his excitement, landing on the end nearest the hole. There was a jar—a rumble, and like lightning the car vanished before our very eyes.

"Save me, Phil!"

We heard no more. Sam had vanished down the hole.

CHAPTER IV.—Fighting the Flood.

"Cheer up, friend. After all, he may still live!"

Thus Rumjidee Jam. We had spent ten minutes staring down the hole, but could see nothing but darkness, hear nothing but the echo of our own voices when we called.

"We must think of ourselves," said Rumjidee Jam. "Thus shall we help your friend."

He was just looking in the third bin when I happened to see something lying among the limy dust within reach of the skeleton hand. I stooped and picked it up. It was a square piece of parchment which looked as though it might have been rolled up at some time, although it was pretty well flattened out now. When I blew the dust off it there came into view curious marks which looked like flytracks.

"Can you read it?" I asked, passing it over to Rumjidee Jam.

He pondered over it a long while before he spoke.

"This, young man, is written in one of the old Tatar dialects," he answered at last.

And Rumjidee Jam began to read:

"In the ninety-ninth year of the dynasty of Han, in the fourth month and the third day of

the month, I did finish the ten treasure houses—all that's plain enough.

"All the diamonds and precious stones which belonged to my grandfather, Ab-Man-Cung, I did put in the ten treasure houses. All the——"

"That's all, my friend. What remains is so disfigured that no man will ever read it. Especially," he smiled in conceited satisfaction, "since I am one of a very small number who can read this very ancient language at all."

"How old do you make it?"

"This dynasty of Han flourished thousands of years ago. It is as old as Babylon—older—as old as time itself."

"Then there must be nine other holes like this hidden away somewhere in this rock."

"Evidently."

"Perhaps that hole connects with one of them! Perhaps Sam— — Thunder! Listen! What is that?"

Suddenly the whole place began to shake and tremble. Then there was a crash, and I saw a great block of stone come out of the wall just above one of the bins, which brought it a little higher than my head.

"An earthquake!" cried Rumjidee Jam.

Now that stone did not fall. It came down and hung by two bronze side braces, and daylight burst upon us through the opening thus formed.

"A way out!" I shouted.

I leaped upon the stone bin, and entirely regardless of the gold in the bottom of it, crawled through the opening. Here I found myself in another chamber, almost the duplicate of the one I had left. There were more stone bins, but no corner opening in the floor. Over on the other side was a square opening like a window. It was through this that the light came.

"Ah! We cannot stay here!" cried Rumjidee Jam, who followed me in, of course.

What he referred to was water. It was pouring down through the ceiling of this singular apartment.

"Listen!" said the Hindu.

Overhead a good deal of noise was going on. It sounded as though many men were hammering on iron.

"We are not the only people here," said Rumjidee Jam. "What can it mean?"

"Means that we are going to be drowned if we stay here," I declared.

He agreed with me. Naturally we went for that hole in the wall and looked out. It was the desert—the everlasting sands that I saw. We were still far up on the side of that mysterious mountain. A narrow ledge ran along outside the opening, and I saw that we would be safe from the water there. Of course we talked and wondered. We tried the stone bins here, but the covers were cemented down and it was no go. With the water up around my ankles I stood pondering, when all at once something dropped. A great big section of the rock which formed the ceiling came tumbling down with a stupendous crash, breaking into a thousand fragments at my feet. But my Hindu friend and I had no time to contemplate the strange phenomenon. Down came the water in such a vast volume that it was a question of prompt escape or drowning. There was no time to talk nor think.

"Quick! The window!" cried the Hindu.
 "Unless you can swim you are lost," he added,
 in the same breath.
 Already the water was up around our necks.
 It was over my head a second later.
 "Come on, Rumjidee!" I shouted.
 We swam for dear life toward the window.

CHAPTER V.—Beauty and the Beasts.

"Here, give me your hand!"
 "I cannot hold up, my friend. I have cramps!
 I am sinking! Ah, I die!"
 "Nonsense!" I shouted.

I caught Rumjidee as he was sinking for the second time. To make a short story of it, after a big lot of bother I pulled him out, helped him through the window and saw him sink down exhausted upon that narrow ledge of rock which was the only thing that kept us from whirling down hundreds of feet below to instant death.

"We can't stay here," I cried. "The water will be out of the window in a minute and will sweep us away as sure as fate!"

He only groaned. I stooped down and raised Rumjidee Jam in my arms. Before I could straighten up again the opening was half obliterated and the water pouring over us in a perfect flood. I managed to crawl further along the ledge and stand upright. Above I could see nothing, but the rocks overhung so far that even to attempt to see the top would have been pretty sure to send me flying off my narrow perch. I laid Rumjidee Jam down on the ledge and stood panting for breath, watching the whirl of the water. In a little while Rumjidee Jam was all right again. A pull at my flask helped him to pull himself together, so to speak.

"Young man, you have saved my life," he said. "Men of my race never forget a service like that."

"If you hadn't lost your head you'd have been all right," said I.

"We had better advance; there is no use staying here."

"Just what I propose to do. Hello! There it goes again."

It was a new sound which disturbed me. A barking, or rather a yelping. We started forward on the ledge, never minding our saturated clothes, for the sun was shining hotter than blue blazes. We had not gone far before we perceived that we were coming to the end of our rope. Right ahead of us the ledge ended as abruptly as if some one had sawed it off.

"It's here! It's another treasure house!" I cried.

I saw the window. It was just like the one we had left to the tender mercy of the water. And the howling was behind it. I paused at the window, which was just too high up for me to look in.

"Hoist me up!" I cried. "Heavens, what a row those brutes are making!"

Rumjidee caught me by the legs and lifted me up so that I could look in through the opening. Scampering about over the golden floor were about a dozen animals—not wolves; but jackals. They were howling hideously.

"What do you see?" asked Rumjidee

"Jackals!"

"Ha! I might have known."

"Another treasure room?"

"Yes, yes! No. 3. Very little good it does us, though. Hello! What now?"

For I had given a sudden start. Down through the hole in the golden ceiling I saw coming a young girl of amazing beauty. She was dressed all in white, and did not look at all like any of the natives I had seen. A rope tied around her body with a second twist under her arms was the means used to lower her. Her face was turned toward me with a look of mingled horror and pleading. One glance at that beautiful face and the mischief was done for your humble servant. I was—there's no use mincing matters—I tumbled head over ears in love with a face I had never set eyes on until then!

"She must be saved!" I shouted.

Rumjidee thought me mad. I seized the ledge, and tearing myself away from him, climbed upon it. Lower and lower came the girl. She was almost within reach of the black muzzles of those howling brutes when I drew my revolver and fired. One jackal fell dead, but another yelping brute had leaped up and seized her dress when with one bolt I leaped through the window, firing as I went.

CHAPTER VI.—Alice the Mystery.

While I was shooting the girl was screaming. I had cartridges in a belt about my waist, and backed up against the wall to load, when all of a sudden came other shots. Crack! Crack! Crack! Jackals were dropping right and left, and I couldn't see a soul. At least, not for a moment. Then up through an opening in the stone floor, which until now I had not noticed, Sam Summers came bounding. Sam always carried two revolvers. With one in each hand he let drive at the jackals. Being loaded up by this time, I did ditto. Such a cracking and yelping you never saw. But it was all over in a moment. Every jackal was dead.

I never stopped to speak to Sam, glad as I was to see him. I hurried to the girl. She had been lowered so that her feet were within about six inches of the floor, and in this position hung suspended. Sam was by my side before I could put out my hand to cut her down. His knife was out as soon as mine was. In fact, we cut her down together, and lowered her gently to the floor, when as a reward for our trouble she promptly fainted, and scared the life out of us both by making us think she was dead. We worked over her for a few moments, but she did not revive. Then, like a couple of fools, we gave it up. I seized his hand and shook it warmly.

"By Jove, old man, I'm glad to see you!" I exclaimed heartily. "I made sure you were a goner."

"Not a bit of it, Phil! Not a bit of it."

"But the car——"

"Only went down a few yards. Landed me in a room below the one where it started, where there were more gold and diamonds scattered about than there is in the whole city of New York."

"And it's the same here!" I exclaimed, looking around. "This is No. 3; yours is No. 4."

"What do you mean, Phil?" demanded Sam. "Have you seen another?"

"Yes."

"But——"

"Hold up!" interrupted Sam. "She's coming to."

The girl had opened her eyes, and was looking at us. We both tumbled head and ears in love with that girl at first sight, and that's all there is about it.

"Speak to her," I said to Sam. "You can speak a few Tartar words." But she interrupted:

"I am an English girl, gentlemen. God will bless you for what you have done for me; but I fear you have saved me only to bring trouble upon yourselves."

I introduced Sam and then myself. She told us that her name was Alice Manning. I asked her—naturally, I think—how she came to be in this part of the world.

But I obtained no satisfaction.

She shook her head.

"It is a mystery I cannot explain, Mr. Winters."

"But at least you can tell us how you came to be here."

"That is no secret. They admit no strangers. I was condemned to die."

"They! Who?"

"Why, the people in the city above."

Was her mind wandering?

A city in this desert! On top of the mountain! It seemed impossible.

I asked her what she meant.

"Why, didn't you know there was a city on the top of this mountain right over our heads?"

"Indeed we didn't."

"There is."

"What race inhabits it?"

"It is inhabited by people very different from those we saw in Khiva or on the desert."

"Ah! You are from Khiva?"

She turned red and looked confused."

"Do not question me any more, Mr. Winters. I have been pledged to secrecy. I shall not break my word."

"But you were going to tell about this city?"

"There is no secret about that. The people captured me and after keeping me prisoner several weeks I was brought before a great assemblage and—but you know the rest. They lowered me into this hole. But for your courage I should now be dead."

It pained her to be questioned, and I stopped it.

"Come!" cried Sam. "Let's go down the ladder to the room I was in before. This place may be watched."

But just then a sudden thought struck me.

"By Jove! I clean forgot old Rumjidee Jam!" I shouted.

"Hello! Where did you leave him?" echoed Sam.

"On the ledge outside the window. And he can't get in without some one to help him."

We hurried to the window.

Sam raised me up, and I looked out.

To my utterable horror, something seemed to have turned the water, and it was now sweep-

ing along the very part of the ledge where we had stood in safety but a few moments before.

I could see nothing of Rumjidee.

I called, I shouted, I yelled.

Rumjidee's strange name came flying back on the écho.

But Rumjidee had vanished, and there was no answer to our cries.

Yet still our number was not unbroken.

We were three when we descended the ladder into Sam's retreat.

"What do you say, Sam?"

"I say try it, old man."

"You think it's best?"

"I see no other way."

I sighed.

"I hate to leave her, Sam," I said in a very spooney way.

"No more than I do."

"Still, I hate to do it."

"Of course. It would be death to Alice to take her with us."

"Decidedly."

"She was condemned by these people, and it would be madness to put her back in their clutches again."

"Most assuredly."

"Well, then, I'll go."

"You?"

"Yes."

"Oh, no!"

"What do you mean—I thought it was decided?"

"Nothing of the sort. I'll go."

"Indeed you won't."

"Indeed I will."

"Stop! You must both go and leave me."

It was Alice Manning, the girl we rescued, who spoke.

She came up behind us, and neither Sam nor I suspected her presence.

"Never mind me," she said bravely. "For either one of you to go alone would not be right—you must both go. If you succeed in securing provisions you can return."

We nearly had our first quarrel, Sam and I.

Alice came upon us just in time.

You see, we were in a tough fix.

Two days had passed since the affair of the jackals.

We were now in treasure house No. 4.

We had discovered Nos. 5 and 6, which were richer in their stores of gold and gems than any of the rest.

These opened off from No. 4 and consequently were below Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

In No. 5 were innumerable statues.

Some of them had their heads broken off or the arms or the legs.

In No. 6 were all sorts of odds and ends which looked as though they might have been taken from some heathen temple.

It was about the same sort of stock as was in No. 4, but with a difference.

The things in No. 4 were plain gold, while those in No. 6 were studded with diamonds, rubies and other gems.

Now all this was very fine, but we could not eat gold or diamonds.

We were hungry—awful hungry.

We had seen nothing of Rumjidee Jam all this time, although Sam and I had done what searching we could.

We even penetrated into No. 2, for the water had subsided hours before.

What was left in the room had run off through some mysterious channel.

But nothing of Rumjidee could we find.

And this brings me down to date, so to speak; that is, to the matter we were discussing when Alice's sweet presence prevented a quarrel.

In our explorations we visited the shaft into which we had been dropped by the balloon.

Here we found, to our astonishment, that the fallen ladders had been restored to their old positions.

Alice assured us that they led to the mysterious city on the top of the butte.

But she would not tell us how she knew.

Should we try it?

We had to try it.

We would have starved if we had not.

We left Alice in No. 1 and after it was dark made the venture.

Strange how that little beauty ruled us.

She made us both go and leave her behind.

Hunger helped drive us too.

Of water we had a-plenty. We found numerous golden vessels in the flooded room filled with the water.

It was pure and sweet, and the cave kept it cool.

As I was saying, just at dark, Sam Summers and your humble servant started out of No. 1.

We were disguised in some old clothes which we discovered in No. 6.

They were cut in the Chinese fashion.

I had a pair of bright green breeches, which would have been just the thing for a New York St. Patrick's Day parade.

Sam's were red, and just as brilliant.

Our blouses were gold embroidered, and our hats—they were round Chinese hats—had a huge diamond displayed in the middle of the crown.

When we were rigged up and ready to start, we showed ourselves to Alice, and she told us we were dressed like the people above us.

She told us further to go on up the ladders until we were challenged, and then to say simply "K'lang," and press boldly on.

So, after much discussion, it was decided to venture the passages, leaving Alice until they could return with provisions. We started immediately and were successful in reaching what was apparently the end of our journey in a short time. It was a large room, but there seemed to be no exit other than the one through which we had come. There was a tremendous racket going on behind the wall at one side of the room, which sounded as if a battle of some sort was in progress. Suddenly there was a tremendous cheer and then silence. Suddenly the entire side of the room flew back.

"Thunderation! What's this?" cried Sam.

We were looking into another room about the size of the one we were in. There were fifteen or twenty people standing there looking at us.

We could not see their faces—could not tell whether they were men or women. They were all dressed in richly embroidered robes, and upon the head of each was a huge pasteboard mask. These masks were made in imitation of the heads of men and animals. I bowed profoundly. So did Sam. The strange beings before us made no return of our salutation. Then one with a lion's head advanced and pulling from beneath his robe a roll of something like parchment, he shook it out. In a sepulchral voice the fellow began to read. Of course we could not understand a word of it.

At last the reading was finished, and the roll fully rolled up. Suddenly a burst of wild music was heard, and a door behind these men flew open. Now all hands suddenly dropped on their backs and began to kick. Through the door we could see big buildings and lights innumerable. There was a vast crowd outside. They filled a semi-circular inclosure, bounded by magnificent structures of white marble. Their heads and faces were in every case concealed by the animal masks, but there seemed to be nothing the matter with their lungs, for the air fairly rang with their wild shouts. At the same instant our crowd got on their feet again, and began pressing about us. No one actually took hold of us, but somehow we were hustled outside and on through the crowd, which made way for us to a sort of a sedan chair—a huge golden box with two seats inside and poles for the bearers to carry it along. By this time the shouts had become deafening. Perhaps this accounts for my not knowing who it was that spoke. For at that very moment a voice said in my ear in good English:

"Keep cool! They are only going to make you their king."

CHAPTER VII.—Kings in Chi-um.

It was the next day after our arrival in the city of Chi-um, which translated means the "city in the clouds." What the voice whispered in my ear that time when the masked crowd pressed about us came true. Sam Summers and your humble servant had been made kings. Of course we were hungry no longer. Far from it! Delmonico's never produced such a dinner as we sat down to in the royal palace of Chi-um that night! But alas! Alice was still where we had left her—starving! Strange—no! There was nothing strange about it, except the accident of our coming up just at that particular time. This was strange if our friend Rumjidee Jam could be believed. It was Rumjidee who whispered to me in the crowd and told me to keep cool. It was Rumjidee who acted as interpreter when the "nobility and gentry" of Chi-um escorted us to the palace, placed golden crowns a yard high over our heads, and seated us on huge golden thrones. But we did not understand what it all meant until after these ceremonies were all over and we found ourselves alone with Rumjidee in a bed chamber so big that we could scarcely see where it begun or where it ended. According to our friend, Rumjidee, some old Chi-um prophet, a thousand years or more before our arrival, had foretold that on a certain moon in a cer-

tain year, all figured out by Chi-um astronomers, two young men of perfect form and radiantly beautiful faces (ahem! That's me!) would arrive in the city unannounced. That they would reign over the people and bring to the city untold wealth. Such was the prophecy. Well, we arrived right on time.

They read us the prophecy—that eight or ten yards of document I told about—and made us kings. But enough of explanation. Let us get down to business once more.

"We talk not here," said the Hindu. "Lay aside those robes and follow me."

I threw off mine in a hurry.

"Ye gods! What a relief!" said Sam, as he dropped his upon the floor.

Our robes were gold-embroidered, and weighed about fifty pounds.

"This way," said Rumjidee.

He led us along a passage and up an interminable flight of marble steps until at last we came out upon the top of a tower—one of three which adorned the royal palace, with the whole city lying spread out at our feet. It was a wonderful sight. I don't think I ever saw in all my travels in the East, and I've been to India twice since then, a more beautiful city. A city compactly built, filled with magnificent structures and alive with people.

"Yours!" cried Rumjidee, waving his hand toward it. "All yours, if——"

He paused.

"What?" I asked.

"The conditions of the prophecy must be fulfilled, sahib."

"I thought they had been fulfilled," said Sam.

"No, not all."

"Well, what else?" I asked.

"You must cover the floor of a certain room in the palace with gold."

"What?"

"Pshaw! We can do it!" cried Sam. "Have you forgotten the treasure-houses?"

"By Jove, that's so! We can."

"Still not all," continued the Hindu. "You are not kings yet. The prophecy must be fulfilled, or your lives will pay the forfeit."

"Speak out, old man! What do you mean?" I exclaimed.

To my horror our friend Rumjidee Jam suddenly whipped out two revolvers. He covered Sam with one and me with the other.

"To fulfill the prophecy, you must produce that girl, and with your own hands light the fires which shall burn her at the stake!" he cried. "That is all. To become kings in earnest you must do it; but unless you instantly swear you will not do it I shall blow your brains out and tumble your bodies down upon the roof below!"

CHAPTER VIII.—The Hundredth Door.

"Swear by your Christian God that you will sacrifice yourself rather than see her sacrificed! Swear that you will save her, that——"

"Hold up! I promise all. Do you suppose I want to stay here?"

"You Americans are an ambitious race. There is much to tempt you—power—gold!"

"They ain't in it, either of them. Are they, Phil?" cried Sam. "We'd rather be reporters in New York than kings on the top of this rock any time."

To this I assented, and Rumjidee put his revolvers down.

"Enough! We are friends again."

"Not until you explain!" I cried.

"You wish to know—what?"

"How came you here?"

"There is a car let down to the base of the mountain daily. In it comes up all the provisions these people live on."

"Who supplies them?"

"The Tekke-Turkomans take care of that. The goods are brought from various places beyond the desert."

"And you came up in the car while I was fighting the jackals?"

"Yes."

"You have been here before?"

"Many times."

"But you——"

"Enough! I shall tell you no more."

"At least you must tell me how you know about Alice, and what she is to you?"

"No! Nothing! Listen to me! Is she hungry?"

"Starving."

"You must go to her and take her food."

"Will they let me?"

"No. They believed her dead till they saw you. Now they doubt."

"How, then, is it to be managed?"

"Trust me," said Rumjidee, and after that he said no more.

We returned to the throne room and the crowd. They were always around us, and Rumjidee always at our side.

"Say, Phil, a week of this sort of thing will kill me!" declared Sam.

I felt the same. Still, what could we do? We had nothing to say. That strange Hindu aeronaut said it all for us, and the trouble was we did not know what he said. I give you my word I was half mad with the horrible thought that this king business had got to go on forever, when Rumjidee, after a long speech at which there was immense cheering, suddenly pointed behind us, and whispered one word:

"Go!"

I sprang to my feet and bolted through the little door, Sam following. To our surprise, Rumjidee did not follow Sam. We hesitated for a moment.

"Aren't you going to wait for him?" asked Sam, when suddenly I started to run along the dark passage which lay behind the door.

"No, not much! Come, Sam!"

We hurried on till we came to the stairs leading up to the tower. By this time we knew that Rumjidee was after us. We could hear him calling along the passage for us to stop. There was a door here. I slammed it shut and bolted it on our side. Then instead of going upstairs we went down. Ten steps brought us into a long corridor brilliantly illuminated with the electric light. This electric light business was only one of many mysteries. In fact, the whole business was a mystery from beginning to end, and the particular mystery with which we had to deal now I

may very properly style the mystery of "the hundred doors." There they were; the electric light showed them to us. Then we started in to examine these doors. They were all locked until we came to the last one. We counted them as we advanced. There were just a hundred. We tried ninety-nine without success.

"No way out here! What in thunder are we to do? They'll kill us sure if we go back!"

Sam groaned as I tackled the hundredth door. Greatly to our surprise, this one opened. Behind it was a small closet. The closet was filled with baskets and boxes. Against the wall hung a huge bunch of brass keys.

"The very thing we want, Sam!" I shouted. "The hundred doors will have to give up their secrets now."

I seized the keys, and hastily examined them. Each one was different. Each had a character stamped on the brass. We started in to use them at once, beginning at the ninety-ninth door, if you like to call it so. But Sam would not.

"This is evidently the beginning!" he cried. "This is door No. 1. Let's tackle No. 2."

After some trouble we found the key and opened the door. A dead brick wall, and nothing more, met our gaze.

"Bother!" cried Sam. "This doesn't amount to anything, Phil. Try No. 3."

And we went right on down the row without better luck. Instead of the hundred doors, we might well have called them the hundred dummies. Behind each door was that same dead brick wall. It was when we reached the ninety-seventh door that we heard them coming. It sounded as though a thousand men were rushing down those stairs. They were shouting—yelling wildly.

"Try the other doors, Phil!" Sam shouted. "There may be a way out. This is Rumjidee's doings. If they catch us, they'll tear us limb from limb."

I hastily unlocked the ninety-ninth door. Here again was the brick wall, same as all the rest. Nothing but the hundredth door now remained, and I thrust the key into the lock. The racket on the stairs by this time had become tremendous. I heard the stairs door give way even as I turned.

"Lost!" cried Sam.

And the hundredth door flew back. No brick wall this time. There stood a man wearing the bird-headed mask. Without speaking, he thrust out two frightfully long arms. With one hand he clutched my shoulder; with the other he grabbed Sam. The grip was like iron, the weight of the hand tremendous. In an instant we were pulled inside and the door closed behind us. All was now dark. Still in that iron grip we felt the floor suddenly drop from beneath our feet. We were hanging now to those iron hands. Horrors of horrors! This was no man! As we were pulled against his body, we found it as hard as stone! It was some frightful automaton dragging us down—down—down!

CHAPTER IX.—The Secret Storehouse

Suddenly there was a sharp click heard, and the automaton stopped. Still we hung suspended

in those iron hands. Another click. Instantly the hands opened, and we dropped upon firm ground.

"Great Godfrey!" I heard Sam groan.

At the same instant another click, and the whole place around us was in a blaze of light.

"Well, well, well!" cried Sam, staring around.

There was nothing so very terrible about it. We were simply in a big storehouse. I understood instantly that this must be the place where the provisions brought to the mountain by the Turkomans were received. We were in a large chamber about a hundred feet square, hewn apparently out of the solid rock. It was the day after our escape from the mysterious city. We had also succeeded in getting out of the storehouse where we had been so suddenly dumped by the automaton and had returned to Alice to find her all right. We had brought enough provisions from the storehouse to last for several days. I told Alice what Mr. Rumjidee Jam said about her—mentioned the burning at the stake business, and a few other pleasant things. But our little housekeeper—so Sam liked to call her—remained the same perfect Sphinx she had been from the start. And so it went on through those three days. On the morning of the fourth day the fun began again. I was up first, and went out on the ledge, where I had retreated from the water, leaving Sam asleep in No. 2, for we gave up No. 1 to Alice at night.

The sun was just rising over the desert, and a brilliant spectacle it was. I looked at it for a few moments, and then turning around, craned my neck to see if I could discover anything of the city. But I could not. High as I knew many of the buildings to be, there was not one among them high enough to come within reach of my vision down there. While I stood looking, the sudden report of a gun was heard, and a shot went whizzing past my head. Now I want you to understand that your uncle retreated in a hurry. I saw the fellow. He was crouching on the ledge further along. There were others behind him. All were tall, fierce-looking men, wearing the dirty white clothes of Mohammedans. I bounced back into No. 2, woke up Sam, and told him that there were Tekke-Turkomans on the ledge.

"But how in thunder did they get up here, Phil?"

"Give it up. They are there, though, and they fired at me."

Sam was on his feet in a moment, and we crept toward the window. Before we reached it a big bushy head was thrust through. It was no Chi-umese, that was sure.

"Get out!" yelled Sam.

He had no more than spoken, when alongside the head came a long-barreled Moorish rifle, one of the kind you see in museums with flintlocks and all that sort of thing. There was no time for argument. "You must understand that these Turkomans are worse than savages. I knew all about them from what I had heard in Khiva, and I drew my revolver and let drive. There was a yell, and the rifle dropped into No. 2, but the head vanished from the hole. At the same instant a hideous howling began outside.

"Thunderation! There's a gang of them!"

Instantly another head appeared at the hole. Crack! It was Sam this time. His shot did the

business, too, if the yells outside meant anything at all. At the same instant I saw Alice's face at the opening between No. 1 and No. 2.

"Oh, Mr. Winters!" she cried. "Oh, what shall we do?"

"Get back, Alice! Get back!" I shouted.

Crack! Another Turkoman head and another shot from me.

"Oh, come here! Come in here!" screamed Alice.

"Impossible!" said Sam. "Look out, Phil! There'll be another one in a minute."

"But you must. I hear them outside on the ledge. They are coming down the ladder. They are going to open the stone."

Here was interesting news. I rushed to the hole, shouting to Sam to attend to the Turkomans.

"Too late!" groaned Alice, as I scrambled through.

For the stone had already been pulled back, and down plumped a Chi-umese into No. 1. Crack! I fired right over Alice's shoulder. The man dropped, but another instantly came down in his place. Crack! That was Sam firing. I let drive again—I emptied my revolver. It was no use. Still they came. Suddenly I heard a tremendous report from No. 2, and knew that one of the Turkoman guns had spoken at last. We were in a mighty ticklish situation. We were attacked on both sides.

CHAPTER X.—Back on the Throne.

"Hold up, Phil! It's no go!"

Through from No. 2 Sam came tumbling.

"They are in. They are in!" he cried.

Then he saw what was before us, and realized just how matters stood. I flung my arm about Alice and retreated against the wall. Down through the opening the Chi-umese came tumbling by dozens. Last came the tall fellow who had read us the prophecy that night. He pointed to us. Instantly the whole crowd flung themselves upon us. We were captured, of course, but in that same instant the Turkomans came dropping through the hole. I'm sure the Chi-umese had not the faintest idea that they were there until that moment. Never in all my life did I hear such a yell of rage as went up. They let us go immediately. I thought I saw a chance to get in their good graces. Already I had reloaded, and rushed in front of them. I shouted like a madman, at the same time firing at the Turkomans who were coming through the hole, jabbering like so many monkeys.

Then in the midst of that deafening uproar I saw every man of the Chi-umese raise his hand and throw something at the Turkomans. It was something round like a ball. Instantly there burst upon our ears dozens of deafening explosions. I felt something strike me on the head with a sharp, stinging thrill which ran like lightning to my toes. That ended it for me. The next thing I knew I was lying on a couch as soft as down, with a gold-embroidered robe drawn up around me. Overhead a shaded electric light burned. The room was of vast extent, and filled with strange articles of furniture, wrought into all sorts of

curious forms. But all this, as I struggle to remember, less attracted my attention than the sight of a man seated at a table under the light, writing upon a long roll of brown paper—scribbling away as for dear life. I drew a long breath as I raised myself to get a better view of him. He raised his head at the same time and looked around at me. It was Rumjidee Jam! He smiled—sarcastically, I thought, and show his white teeth.

"Well, so you still live, Mr. Winters," he said.

"It seems so. Where am I?"

"You are in the royal palace of Chi-um."

"This is not the room I was in before."

"The king of Chi-ums has many rooms."

"Where are my friends?"

"Meaning your associate on the throne?"

"You know very well."

"Do I?"

"You understand me, sir!"

"Mr. Summers has made a fool of himself. I cannot tell you more."

"Dead?"

"I do not know. He tried to fight. He was overpowered and carried away."

"And Alice?"

He gave me a look of the most intense hatred.

"Thanks to your stupidity, Alice Manning is now a prisoner," he said slowly. "Better for you would it have been if the mool ball which accidentally struck your head had killed you. I gave you fair warning, but you would not heed, and now up to the point of the burning of that innocent girl to the stake, the ancient prophecy of these people has been exactly fulfilled."

I was growing interested in spite of the seriousness of the situation.

"How fulfilled?" I demanded. "The room which was to have its floor covered with gold——"

"It has been done!"

"What?"

"Done yesterday."

"Ah! I have been here more than one day."

"You have been here a week. You are the only man ever known to have survived the blow of a mool ball."

"What are these terrible mool balls?"

"Simply what you would call little storage batteries. They shock their victim to death."

"Then the Turkomans——"

"They were killed to a man."

"Explain, Rumjidee. Tell me all. This uncertainty will drive me mad."

He shook his head.

"I have nothing to tell you," he sternly said. "If it is any satisfaction to you I will say that these Turkomans are the first who have succeeded in climbing the mountains. It will never be tried again."

"I thought you said the Chi-umese were friends of the Turkomans?"

"There are many tribes of Turkomans, sahib. But to return to the gold."

"Ah, yes! The gold!"

"They emptied the treasure houses. There is no longer any gold there below."

"Do you mean to tell me these people did not know of the existence of the gold or the treasure houses?"

"It is so. It had long since been forgotten."

Suddenly a bell sounded loud and clear. Rumjidee sprang to his feet.

"The time has come! Arise!" he said.

"What—what is it?"

"Arise! Follow me, if you can; I will send for bearers to carry you if I must."

I staggered off the bed, where I had been lying fully dressed.

"Can you walk?" he demanded.

"Yes—I think so. But tell me——"

"Silence! Follow me!"

Follow him! He seized my arm with a grip almost as firm as that iron man, and hurried me from the room. A horrible fear seized me—I own it. I felt that something dreadful was going to happen, as after leading me through various winding passages he at length flung open a door. It was the same room we had been in before. There was an immense number of people assembled—men and women—the place was packed. But they did not stand upon the tiled floor, as had been the case on the previous occasion. Spread all over the floor, up to the very foot of the throne, upon which Rumjidee now placed me, was the contents of the six treasure houses. These people—my subjects—ha, ha! My subjects!—now flung themselves upon their backs and kicked before me. Kicked—just think of it—kicked upon a mass of solid gold.

CHAPTER XI.—The Fall of Chi-um.

Once the bell struck!

Twice the bell struck!

Three times the bell struck!

"Take care! Hold on tight!"

Thus Mr. Rumjidee Jam, calling to your very humble servant, Phil Winters, who just at that particular moment was playing king. But a word from Rumjidee warned me. Suddenly the crowd caught the square platform dias, or whatever you like to call it, upon which the throne rested, and lifted the whole business up bodily. Great doors flew open. There was the street—the square filled with a mighty swaying crowd, right before us. As I advanced, on the shoulders of the dear knows how many men, the crowd gave way before us. Suddenly began a most unearthly clatter. Music from a thousand strange-sounding instruments. Tom-toms were beating, one-stringed fiddles twanging, hideous horns blowing, and huge, brazen cymbals crashing. After some further tumbling about, the throne stopped. They had brought me into an open space from which the crowd was kept back by ropes. In the middle of this open space stood a little pyramid with flattened top. On the top of this pyramid, which was reached by a broad flight of steps, was a pole or stake, about ten feet high, and made of what appeared to be solid gold. Now, suddenly the music ceased, and every voice was hushed. Instead of looking at me, as considering I was supposed to be their king one would have thought they might, all eyes were turned in the opposite direction. Of course, I looked that way, too. Then I saw her coming. Alice! She was clothed in those same white, flowing robes. Men with rich dresses—priests, probably—led her toward the pyramid. Her hands were bound behind her. Her beautiful

hair hung down loosely all over her shoulders. They led her up the steps and tied her to the golden stake. Of course, I had dropped to their game before this. This was what Rumjidee had predicted. They were going to burn that poor girl alive. It was tough. But what could be done? You never saw quicker work than took place then. It seemed but an instant, and they had Alice tied to the stake. Then some twenty men rushed up the steps. Each carried bundles of what looked like short dry sticks upon their shoulders. It was an artificial wood which these people made, having none of the real stuff to waste in bonfires, of course. Next I knew this was heaped up around the poor girl, and one of the priests who had accompanied her turned and in a loud voice began addressing the crowd. The next I knew a wild shout rose on all sides of us. There was Rumjidee Jam without his turban, and his hair all flying, rushing up the steps. Shouting words which I could not comprehend, the maddened Hindu, waving a glittering knife, began striking at the priests right and left. What happened then was horrible. I saw it and it drove me mad. They all seemed to close about him in an instant. I saw him flung high into the air and off the pyramid into the very midst of the crowd, which fell upon him, howling and yelling like so many wild beasts.

Now was not all this enough to drive a man mad? I tell you it did the business for your humble servant. I can't tell you how I did it, but it was done—done before I knew it. There I was on top of the pyramid with Alice on my arm. I had cut her free. My left hand was about her waist. In my other was my revolver. I was firing at the priests right and left.

"Let me go, Phil! Save yourself!" I heard her murmur, when the end came.

For it came then—instantly. I heard the report like a thousand Krupp guns, all fired at the same time. I saw the big buildings all about us sway and topple over upon the heads of the maddened throng, who even then were rushing toward the pyramid. The next I knew we were falling. The mountain was going to pieces. The pyramid was sinking into a vast crevice which had opened in the solid rock.

CHAPTER XII.—Saved by a Tub.

We stuck to the pyramid while the frightened priests of Chi-um and the others who were with us upon it when the earthquake came, tumbled off in a hurry. Thus when the earth opened and swallowed us up we were alone. I think it could not have been over thirty or forty feet that the pyramid dropped. Others things came down with it. Great stones which had formed part of the pavement. The pile of sticks. The golden stake to which Alice was to have been burned. Then another shock followed. It was so severe that it threw us on our faces. The mountain seemed tumbling all to pieces. Suddenly all was still, and profound silence reigned there in the darkness. Then it was that Alice and I began to collect our senses, and we had that little confidential talk.

"I'll tell you my story, Phil. I've nothing to keep back now," she said.

"Hold on a minute," I replied. "Don't you hear?"

"What?"

"That voice calling."

"I hear it now."

"What can it mean?"

"Listen!"

We both heard it distinctly then.

"Hello, hello, hello!"

And the sound seemed to come from a vast distance far below us. It saved our lives—no doubt of it.

"There's an opening here!" I exclaimed. "We must have a light."

Now I had already lighted one of the few matches I had remaining. It flashed for a moment, and went right out. Thus I only had time to see the rocks all around us. Now I tried it again. I not only lit the match, but started those sticks burning. They flashed up in great shape, sending out a spicy perfume which was simply delicious. But Alice drew back in horror. At the foot of the pyramid yawned a frightful chasm. It was the same on both sides. Only at the back was the pyramid against the rocks. It had caught somehow—Heaven knows how. We were hanging between life and death, so to speak. And from the depths of that black gulf we could hear the voice calling:

"Hello, hello, hello!"

"Hello!" I yelled back. "Who are you? Where are you?"

"A friend. Here!"

It was not Sam's voice. At least not unless the echo had strangely altered it.

"Where?"

"Look!"

I suddenly beheld a light far below us. Only for a minute and it vanished. Then the voice yelled again.

"Don't—look—down! Look up! The—rocks—are—breaking! You—can't—hope—to hold—on—where—you—are!"

"Oh, Phil—Phil!" cried Alice, trembling all over.

I thought she was going to collapse, she shook so. Looking up at the same instant I saw what until now I had never noticed. It was a square box hanging suspended to a pulley, after the fashion of a mine tub. The rope passed through a hole in the ledge behind us. Where this went after that of course we couldn't see.

"Pull—the—tub—down—and—get in!" shouted the voice.

"Oh, Phil—Phil!" moaned Alice.

Still I did not heed her. I leaped up and caught the tub—box I should have called it—which was just within my reach. It came down very easily, the rope running out of the hole and over the pulley. I expected Alice would make some objection to entering it, which I was determined we must do. To my surprise she climbed right in even before I asked her. I held my breath. You see, I expected the tub would go flying down into the chasm just with her weight. But no! The thing had been made fast somehow, for there it hung. I leaped in after her.

As I had I taken my feet off the pyramid then there was a rush and a roar and we saw the structure go crashing down into the chasm, scattering the fire I had lighted in every direc-

tion. Alice shrieked in terror, and flung her arms about my neck. Matters now looked pretty serious, for at the same instant the tub started down with a whirl. Whatever held the tub a second before, was not holding it now.

CHAPTER XIII.—Lost—Lost—Lost.

"Courage, friends! You are safe!"

Just as I had abandoned all hope, these words were shouted suddenly. At the same instant I felt the rope "bite," and the fall of the tub was stayed. Still we could see no one. The vanished fire had left us in the blackest darkness.

"It's all right," said the voice quietly. "I've got a grip on the rope again."

"Father—father!" shrieked Alice.

Then to my amazement the voice exclaimed:

"Who calls me father? Who is this imitating the voice of my dear child who is a thousand miles away?"

"I'm here, father!" she screamed. "I knew your voice as soon as you spoke!"

"Alice, what can you mean?" I gasped.

"It is my father, Phil. Rumjidee brought me here to find him! He——"

"Here you are!" cried the voice suddenly, breaking in upon her speech.

The tub ceased to descend. Seized by a strong hand it was drawn inward. Then something snapped and there was light. A man wearing the tattered uniform of a British officer stood before us with one of those electric torches in his hand.

"Alice!" he exclaimed. "Great heavens! It is so."

They were locked in each other's arms in a moment, while I stood by on the rock wondering what it all meant.

Recovering from his surprise, the officer put Alice gently back and turned to me.

"I have not yet had the pleasure of an introduction," he said, with all the stiffness of a British officer. "Perhaps you will explain, Alice. I left you safely in Calcutta. How is it that I find you in company with this gentleman here?"

"This is Mr. Phil Winters, father," said Alice. "Twice he has saved me from death; but for his courage I should not be here now."

"Mr. Winters, I am Captain Manning, of the 9th, now detached on special duty," said the officer, shaking hands with me warmly. "Although this sudden appearance of my daughter, following on top of the worst earthquake shock I ever experienced, has somewhat shaken me up, I want to do the hospitable. Follow me, please."

He waved his electric torch and started off along the gallery with true military tread.

"Don't mind his stiffness Phil; it's only his way," whispered Alice after he had gone a little ahead.

We had not far to go. In a moment we came into one of those mysterious rooms with daylight streaming in through a square opening in the wall.

"Another treasure house! This is No. 7!" I involuntarily exclaimed.

And it was evidently one not discovered by the Chi-umese. Heaped up against one of the walls was an immense number of little golden idols

More astounding still was the flash and glitter of the pile, for the eyes of every idol were diamonds—small stones, it is true, but full of fire for all that.

"This is my headquarters at present," said Captain Manning. "Not very convenient, perhaps, but the best I can do. Sit down, Mr. Winters. I—that is to say—I——"

I turned away and pretended to be examining the idols. With all his stiffness Captain Manning was but a man, and I could see that he was much moved. He drew Alice to the window, which was higher up than any I had seen in the other treasure houses. Here they stood talking in low tones, with their backs to me, for fully fifteen minutes. I knew that Alice had saved me the trouble of explanation when he turned to me again and spoke.

"I thank you a thousand times, Mr. Winters!" he exclaimed, shaking hands once more. "Alice has told me all, and you certainly have a right to demand some explanation on our part."

"It seems so to me, captain," I quietly said.

"Sir," he began, "I am a British officer in the service of my country. The word I am about to use is objectionable to me, but I must use it. I am a spy."

"Six months ago I was sent out by balloon, in company with the native officer you know as Rumjidee Jam, to examine into the Russian operations in this part of Central Asia. I trusted this man fully, but he proved a traitor. It seems that he was in love with my daughter, although I never dreamed of such a thing."

"It is so, Phil," said Alice. "For fear of making matters worse for you I concealed it. I was afraid of the result."

"He is a very highly educated and remarkable man," continued Alice's father. "On his mother's side he is Chi-umese, but his father was a Hindu, and he was educated in India. By means of such men as he the Chi-umese keep themselves posted as to the doings of the outer world. Of course, I had never heard of them when I started, but I was to learn."

"We accomplished our journey in safety. I learned all I wished to know and more, and we were returning, when Rumjidee suddenly confessed his love for Alice, and wished me to promise that she should be his wife."

"Of course, I refused. He attacked me. It was a battle in the air, and a terrible one."

"We fought with knives, and in the end I was fearfully wounded. Consciousness left me, and the next I knew I was lying in bed in Rumjidee's own house in the mysterious city above us from which you have so strangely escaped."

"And this was months ago?" I asked.

But I was not to receive my answer then. Once more the earthquake. The stone floor upon which we sat began to tremble all at once.

"Heavens! It has come again!" cried Captain Manning, springing up.

But that was only the first shock. Now came the second. With a thunderous report the floor seemed to open in a hundred places, while the whole mountain rocked like a ship in a storm.

"Lost!" groaned Captain Manning, flinging his arms around Alice.

As I threw up my face at the same instant. And as I fell I saw them sink down

through a great fissure which opened between us.

Lost! Lost! Lost!" I could hear him cry above the awful roar.

CHAPTER XIV.—Sam Shows Up.

Alone! This was the first thing I thought of when I came to my senses after that last earthquake shock. Terrific! The thought of it, I mean. Alice had vanished. Captain Manning had vanished. Rumjidee Jam was supposed to be dead. Sam was in the hands of the Chi-umese, and probably dead, too. I realized all this, and knew that it was no longer three, but only one. Alone! Had I been asleep a minute, an hour, a month, or a year. Here I was in No. 7. But everything had changed. The top was off this last-discovered treasure house, and the bottom had dropped out, so to speak. I refer to the fissure which had swallowed up Alice and her father. It opened at my feet and had not closed again. Up through the opening smoke or steam was pouring. Every now and again a great burst of flame was visible. Thus I stood there watching until all at once I heard a voice behind me say:

"Hello, Phil! How are you, old man?"

Take my word for it, that was the worst shock I had experienced yet.

I whirled round and there was Sam.

"Sam! Sam!" I shouted. "Great Godfrey! Is it you?"

"Nobody else, Phil!" he cried, clutching my hand.

Well, we just fell all over each other, and I ain't ashamed to own it either. It was fully five minutes before we were cool.

"How came you here? What happened you? Where have you been?"

I was asking a dozen questions in a breath.

"Well, Phil, they had me locked up in an underground hole, but the bottom dropped out of my dungeon when the earthquake came."

"Tell me about it."

"There's nothing to tell. I crawled through an opening made in the stone floor, found a flight of stone steps, came down them, and here I am."

"And the city—is it totally destroyed?"

"I don't know anything at all about it. I expect you to tell me that."

Finding Sam had no story of his own, I told him mine. Still the bodies kept on falling. Of course, Sam was immensely interested at what I had to relate about Captain Manning and Alice.

"But your steps didn't bring you out here," I said at last.

"Oh, no."

"Where then?"

"Hold on, Phil! Of course this is a new treasure house—what number is it?"

"No. 7."

"And No. 6?"

"Is on the other side of that chasm."

"Then I can show you No. 8 and No. 9."

"Where?"

"Hark!"

All the while we were talking the bodies of people from the city above us kept flashing past us, falling down into the chasm that was before our feet.

No body had fallen for a few minutes now. But just then, far above us, we heard the barking of a dog.

"Here it is, Phil!" cried Sam.

He pointed up. I could see a small dog coming down with a whirl. The poor brute was howling piteously.

"Sam!" I shouted, "hold on to my coat-tails. I can catch him."

"No, no, Phil."

"Yes."

"Why?"

"For luck! Hold on."

Sam grasped my coat-tails and I leaned as far over the fiery gulf as I dared. And I did it. As the dog came whirling down I caught him in my outstretched hand.

"Hurrray!" I shouted. "It's all right now!"

"What can you mean, Phil?"

"We are three again—always three!"

I was growing superstitious, you see, but there had been enough to make me so. I felt that there could be no luck unless our original number remained unbroken. But it was all right now. Sam had shown up and the prettiest little Chi-umese hairless dog you ever laid eyes on came tumbling down into my arms.

"All right, now," I shouted. "What's done can't be undone! Lead on, Sam, and show us the old Tartar king's treasure houses No. 8 and No. 9."

Swish! Plunk! Down swooped another body into the fiery gulf as we turned away.

"Poor Alice!" murmured Sam.

Just then it came. A cry.

"Phil! Phil Winters! Phil!"

Not dead! Could it be? It was Alice's voice to a certainty. Alive then—but where? Where, indeed? Such was the effect of the echo that the cry seemed to come from all over No. 7. For now it was heard again.

"Phil! Phil Winters! Save us, Phil!"

CHAPTER XV.—Treasure Houses Nos. 8 and 9.

Sam showed me the steps by which he had come down from Chi-um.

"There they are, Phil!" he exclaimed, triumphantly. "No flies on No. 9, old man. It leaves all the rest in the shade."

And in point of hidden wealth this was so. A ~~man~~ ^{man} around what I had believed to be a solid wall of rock brought us in No. 8. It was the same old business. There had been no break in the ceiling here. The little window in the wall sent daylight down upon another pile of precious stuff. This time it was "dishes," as Sam called them. An immense quantity of household utensils of every description, and all of solid gold and of the most exquisite workmanship lay heaped up against the wall. But I barely glanced at them. They were of no earthly use to us. Moreover, I was in a state of anxiety about Alice bordering on madness. Poor Alice! For fully fifteen minutes we stood there listening to her cry. Then it ceased to come, and all that time we tried in vain to make out where she was. It was no go. After that we lingered in No. 8 for a good half-hour before I would consent to move. I shouted until I was hoarse, but no answer came, and at

last, very much against my will, I was forced to give it up. From No. 8 we passed to No. 9. That's where we were now. It was the king pin of all the treasure houses so far, and no mistake. Diamonds! Hundreds—yes, thousands! Not little ones, either, but what Sam called "old whalers" in one breath, and "big busters" in the next. A huge heap of beautifully cut stones lay against the wall. That they had once been set was evident, for some of the settings remained on them still. It would have driven us wild once. But not now. I looked at them indifferently.

"No use to us, Sam, not a bit," was all I said.

"Right you are, Phil! There never was anything so aggravating."

"What's to be done?"

"Blest if I know!"

At the same instant a huge rat ran across the stone floor.

"Jerusalem!" yelled Sam, and he jumped right on top of the pile of diamonds.

You see, Sam didn't like rats. Our dog did, though. He was in my arms poor little chap, shaking and shivering, when all at once, whip! away he went after the rat. The rat ran up the wall and out of the window, which was in No. 9, same as all the rest. This window was lower down than the others. Of course the dog couldn't run up the wall, but he got there just the same. Drawing back, he gave one leap up, caught the rough stone ledge, and vanished like a flash. I heard a bark and a squeak.

"He's got him, Sam!" I shouted.

I sprang up, caught the ledge, and crawled through the window.

Now, I give you my word for it, they might have heard me yell up in Chi-um.

"No. 10! No. 10!"

It was the last of the treasure houses of the old Tartar king. And in it I had discovered the greatest treasure of all. What was it? Hold on a minute! Instead of following me as I expected he would do, I heard a yell from Sam which was anything but a joyful one. Crack! A shot from my friend's revolver told me that some new trouble had come.

"Phil! Phil!" yelled Sam.

Crack! Then a wild yell. Then an explosion.

"Phil! For heaven's sake come here, Phil."

That was enough. I caught up the dog, who was shaking the rat, and went back through the window in a hurry. There stood Sam against the wall with his revolver cocked and ready. He was watching the entrance to No. 9.

"Discovered!" I gasped.

For at the entrance lay a Chi-um man dead.

"I shot him! He threw his mool ball at me!" gasped Sam. "Didn't you hear it explode against the wall?"

"There are more of them if there's one," said I.

"Don't know, Phil. I guess there must be."

"We mustn't guess—we must know!"

"Settled! Come on!"

I drew my revolver and advanced toward my dead subject. Not a sound was heard. We scarcely dared to breathe. Suddenly we heard loud shouts in the distance and above us.

"No time to be lost," I said, leaping over the corpse and making my way into No. 8.

"He came down the steps came as I did," declared Sam. "That's one thing sure."

He hurried to the front of the steps and listened, for the shouting had now ceased.

"I hear 'em! They are coming down! That fellow was only the advance guard," I cried.

Then again came the shout. It sounded like a hundred voices rolled into one. Certainly a crowd of Chi-umese were coming down the steps with a rush.

"They've got onto us, and we can't stop 'em," groaned Sam. "It's all up with us, Phil."

"Not by a jugful!" I cried. "What's this?"

I saw it even as Sam spoke. There was a chain hanging down over the opening in the rock at the steps. Now, my experience in the old mining shaft told me that chains meant something every time down here underground. I sprang up, caught this rusty old affair, and gave it a pull. Bang! Something flew over our heads. It struck the wall and exploded with fearful force.

"Another mool ball! I see 'em! There they are!" roared Sam.

"Let 'em stay here!" I shouted, pulling the chain.

It was just as I expected. Down came a heavy door of solid iron. It slipped into place and cut off that gang as pretty as you please. Bang! Bang! Bang! Shouts came with the explosion. The mool balls were rattling against the door. The Chi-um men were shouting like mad. "Safe for the moment!" cried Sam, "but that blasted door—will it hold?"

CHAPTER XVI.—Great Treasure in No. 10.

It held! All the banging of the mool balls never had the least effect upon that door. Because why? It was steel. I found that out while they were banging away there.

"By Jove! these old Tartar kings must have been a blamed sight further advanced in the arts of civilization than their successors," declared Sam, when I told him of what the door was made.

"I guess you'll think so when you see the great treasure I've found in No. 10," I chuckled.

"What is it?"

"But these fiends?"

"We can't stop them—let them batter away."

"They must have got onto my escape, Phil."

"I don't think so."

"You don't!"

"No."

"What then?"

"Why, the whole city is in a state of ferment. Not a doubt but there are the roughs—the Chi-umese anarchists, so to speak."

"Might be. But this No. 10 business. You look so infernally jolly, Phil."

"And I have reason, dear boy. You may thank the rat."

"No, the dog that chased the rat."

"Say rather the ragged reporter that caught the dog that chased rat, that——"

"Shut up and come on."

We were at the window then, and we crawled through. As I didn't describe No. 10 before, let me do it now. Or rather let me describe half of it, for the other half, thank goodness, had either been shaken out by the earthquake, or had dropped out some other way. Thus No. 10 was open to the full glare of the broiling sun. Down,

down, down to the desert these fearful rocks extended. Up we could not look, because above us they projected. Such was No. 10.

"Where—what—by the living Caesar! Immense!"

Thus cried Sam as we entered.

"Didn't I tell you?"

"It beats all, Phil!"

"Hope it will."

"But how came it here?"

"Tartar king."

"Tartar king be blowed! No Tartar king a thousand years ago ever made a balloon like that."

The secret of the great treasure of No. 10 is out at last. There, lying in one corner, was a huge mass of oiled silk, ropes, cordage, etc., and attached to it, standing upon the stone floor at a little distance, was a perfect car. Nor was this all. Ranged along the other side of the room was a perfect chemical laboratory, with bottles and flasks and beakers and a furnace, and all that sort of thing. This was the side we came in. Still it was not all. The third side—the fourth had dropped out, remember—was entirely taken up by a big tank, if I may so call it, made of oiled silk like the balloon itself. But it was not flabby and loose. It stood out, yielding but slightly to pressure. From the top came a rubber tube with a stop-cock. This tube hung down and its end was close to the gas valve of the balloon.

"I know. Rumjidee Jam!" cried Sam.

"Of course!"

"He has been in the habit of visiting the city by balloon. He's an expert aeronaut."

"You bet! Captain Manning told me as much."

"The old rascal! This is his workshop, no doubt, and the means for it all lie right at hand."

"The diamonds!"

"Exactly. No doubt Rumjidee has been drawing on them for years."

"Took 'em to India and sold a few at a time."

"That's it! No wonder he's a power with the British government."

Thus Sam and I figured the matter out. Was it so? Meanwhile the banging on the door in No. 8 had ceased, and we seemed to have the place all to ourselves. Everything appeared to have quieted down completely. For two hours we worked over the balloon. You see, we were determined to go as soon as possible. Everything was at hand. There were American canned meats and canned vegetables. There was water coming from a tap set in the rock connecting with some hidden spring. The tank was half full of gas, and everything about the balloon in perfect order. That Rumjidee Jam had so left it that he might escape from Chi-um at a moment's notice neither of us could question. To us it was a veritable God-send, this great treasure of No. 10. We got the balloon headed out into the open without much difficulty. It was perfectly secured to the floor by ropes which passed through iron staples. Everything ready, we began the process of filling, and had no trouble with that, either.

"Let us alone while we load up," said Sam, when the big bag began to swell.

We went back into No. 8, and looked at the gold. Then we looked at each other.

"No use, Phil, we can't take it," groaned Sam. "It's too blame bad!"

Of course, it would have been crazy to think of it.

"We might take some instead of ballast," I suggested.

And we had to. When we came to look for ballast bags there were none. Rumjidee had done the same thing before.

"We'll load up with all the diamonds we can carry," said Sam, "and take as much gold as we think she'll rise with."

We did this. We put the diamonds in wide-mouthed glass jars, which we found on the laboratory bench. I'd rather not say how many there were. It was more than five thousand—all big stones of the purest water. I feel almost as though I was telling a fairy tale as I write it, but upon my life it's true! All this time the balloon was getting bigger and bigger, and the tank smaller and smaller. At last the latter collapsed altogether, and the job was done. As to how the gas got into the tank you will have to ask Rumjidee Jam, if you can find him—don't ask me, for I don't know.

"Shall we start now or wait till dark, Phil?"

"What's your idea?"

"Now!"

"They may fire a mool ball into the balloon when we float past the city."

"Then 'twould be good-by, John—guess we better wait till dark."

"On the other hand, if we start in the dark we may run against the rocks and end the chapter that way."

"We'd better go now, then."

And so, after some further talk; it was decided. We made the ropes all ready. We loosened all but three. There was no wind to speak of, so the balloon did not strain much. Of course, you understand it was no very big affair. Sam got in first, took the dog with him, and seized the valve rope. I followed with my jack-knife open, ready to cut the ropes.

"Will she rise out of this hole?" queried Sam, nervously.

"She's got to rise!" I cried. "Here goes."

The knife was actually on the rope when I heard it. I mean the cry from the rocks below.

"Phil! Phil Winters! Don't desert us."

At the same instant the dog, which had been whining piteously, leaped from Sam's arms over the side of the balloon and went whirling down.

"Phil! Phil! Phil!"

Again the cry. It sent every drop of blood tingling through my veins. But even my love for Alice, my desire to save her, was not necessary to hold me back. I wouldn't have gone without her now if she had been my worst enemy. Three was an unlucky number. The dog had left us. Now we were only two.

"Phil! Phil! Save me, Phil!" came the shout again, as I leaped from the balloon.

CHAPTER XVII.—How I Rescued Alice.

"Hold on, Phil Winters!"

It was Sam calling me from the car.

"Hold on, Phil!" he repeated. "Don't get excited. Keep your shirt on, or we are going to everlasting smash."

The remark recalled me to myself. Of course,

the way I jumped out of the balloon showed my excitement, and when I am excited I am pretty apt to lose my head. At the same instant Alice's voice was heard calling again.

"Save me! Save me, Phil! I am alive! I am here!"

"Just tie the balance of those ropes again, will you?" remarked Sam, coolly. "We ain't going to start yet."

It was the first thing to do. I saw that Phil was right, and hastened to do it. But before I began the operation I shouted back to Alice. I had already done so several times. Now I shouted louder—louder still. All of no use. For some mysterious reason I could hear Alice's voice, but Alice could not hear mine. But then this was easily accounted for in a place where rocks were projecting everywhere to cut off the sound waves and deflect them from their natural course.

"What's to be done if we can't make her hear, Sam?" I cried.

"Phil," he said, "don't be a fool."

"Complimentary, but it don't answer my question."

"Don't you see that she must have heard you, or she would never have called in the first place?"

"It must be so, Sam."

"Then there must be some one spot where she can hear us."

"True again. But where is that spot?"

"That," said Sam, quietly, "we must make it our business to find out."

"That's it!"

"I'll try it here."

"Alice—Alice—Alice!" yelled Sam from the car.

No answer. In a moment came the old cry again.

"Phil! Save me, Phil!"

I moved from place to place, shouting. All without effect. I was beginning to despair, when all at once Sam gave a shout.

"I have it, Phil!"

"What?"

"She never heard us at all—she saw you."

"Saw me?"

"Yes."

"But how—when?"

"She is below us! It was when you climbed out on the ropes to fix the valve."

"Soon settled!" I shouted.

Leaping into the car I seized the ropes and worked myself out to the bigger bag. Understand the situation. The car rested on the floor of the cave, while the body of the balloon projected out into the open at an angle.

"Phil! Phil! I see you, Phil!" came the cry before I was half-way to the balloon.

"Alice!" I yelled.

"Here I am, Phil. Poor father is horribly injured. Save us if you can."

Clinging to the ropes, I looked down. Now I saw her. She was nearly a hundred feet below me, standing upon a ledge so narrow that it was a mystery to me how she stood there at all. The floor of No. 10 overhung this ledge. It would have been scarcely possible for her to hear our voices from where we called. I saw Captain Manning, too. He lay stretched out upon the ledge a little further along. My heart failed me.

I was not the sort of fellow to go off and leave them even if they had been my worst enemies. But to rescue them—ah, there was the rub.

"Alice, how came you there?" I shouted.

"Phil, I don't know. We fell in the darkness and father has broken his leg. I groped my way to the light and dragged him after me. We are here, and that is all I can tell. Can you help us, Phil, or are we to be left here to die?"

"Alice," I shouted, "be brave. I am going now, but you will see me again. I'll either help you or perish in the attempt."

I worked my way back hand over hand. I had taken in the whole situation. I knew just what I was going to do. And Sam knew what sort of a fellow I was, and said nothing. He knew it wouldn't be of the slightest use.

"I suppose you'll try it if it kills you, Phil Winters," was the only remark he made.

"I shall try it if it kills me. Give me that spare rope, Sam."

He handed me the rope. It was a good one-inch rope, evidently of English make. I stepped out of the car, and untying one of the hold ropes of the balloon which he had just tied again, passed the rope through the iron eye-bolt in its stead.

"Lay hold here, Sam. Let's see what strength it has."

We both got hold and threw all our weight on it again and again. There was no give to the rope. Then I made a coil of a small line, and fastened it to my waist. Next I made Sam tie the inch rope securely under my arms.

"You will do it, old fellow?" he called in husky tones.

"I will do it."

"Good-by, if I never see you again."

He wrung my hand warmly, but we spoke no more after that. Then I dropped on my hands and knees, stuck my feet over the rock, and looked at Sam. The look alone was necessary. He seized hold of the rope. I wouldn't have given the dear fellow one single order for all the world. I knew that he would do the very best he could.

"One, two, three! Let her go!" I whispered to myself.

Then I dropped. Great Godfrey! it was a horrible sensation, and don't you forget it. But Sam held on nobly, letting the rope through the eye-bolt little by little. So down I swung all right until I reached the ledge upon which Alice stood. I yanked the rope, gave the signal agreed upon. It stopped. There stood Alice about ten feet away as pale as death.

"Oh, Phil Winters! You're a brave fellow!" she said, chokingly, "but you ought not to have done it, for I can never go up there!"

"Yes, you can."

"Never, but my poor father shall—he shall be saved."

"And you also, Alice. Here, catch this line and pull me in!"

I flung her the line, and she caught it on the fly. Now, I should like well enough to magnify the dangers and difficulties of this undertaking, but I can't stick to the truth. Danger there was, from the first moment to the last, of course, but no more real difficulty. Alice pulled me in. In an instant I was beside her on the ledge. Oh, the unspeakable joy of that moment! I caught her in my arms, and—— But all this is immate-

rial. Captain Manning was perfectly helpless and unconscious as well. Could he live? It was doubtful. I felt that he could not. We were four now, and I felt certain that something would occur to reduce our number to three. Still Alice would have it that he should go up first.

"No!" I declared, "it must be you. Sam would not know what to do with him unless he understood the state he was in."

She yielded at last. Bending over the unconscious man, she kissed him tenderly on the forehead. Then she let me put the rope around her, and I gave the signal to Sam to haul away. I had to shut my eyes as she ascended. I could not watch her. Then I turned to Captain Manning, who I had promised should go up next. Heavens! Why had I not seen it—why had I been so dumb as not to have known? I dropped the hand I had taken. It was the hand of a corpse. No need to tell Alice, when at last Sam drew me up. One glance at my face was enough.

"Dead!"

"Dead?" she gasped.

I repeated the word.

With one sharp cry she fell fainting at Sam's feet.

"It is fate!" I breathed. "Four would finish us all! It must be three."

CHAPTER XVIII—Off by Balloon.

"Ready?"

"All right, Phil!"

"Hold on! That valve rope is crossed again. It must be fixed."

"Be mighty quick, then! That racket means something more than mere noise."

Thus Sam as I leaped from the car to adjust the loose valve rope which had caught on one of the stays which I was about to cut. Ten minutes had scarcely elapsed since I was drawn up after Alice. They were minutes of terror, for the attack on the iron door in No. 8 had begun again. Evidently they were directing some huge battering ram against it. The thumping and banging on the iron was tremendous. Would it stand the pressure? That was something neither Sam nor I could tell. But it needed no prophet to predict for us now. As I leaped out of the car there came a frightful crash. The floor of No. 10 actually trembled.

"Great Scott! They're through, Phil!" roared Sam.

There was no need to tell it to me. I could hear them coming. Adjusting the rope I leaped into the car.

"Shoot the first man who shows his head at the window!" I shouted.

Then was the time to do it. At the same instant a man sprang through the opening. It was all there was left of Rumjidee Jam. Snap. I drew a bead on the Hindu, and pulled the trigger.

"Empty, by thunder!" I groaned, for the Chiumen came flocking after him and there was no report.

"Hold, sahib. Do not try to kill! Save me!" cried Rumjidee Jam.

Was he in earnest? Were they after him? His

face was one mass of bandages, his left arm was in a sling.

“Save me! Alice! Plead for me! The balloon is mine! I have a right——”

“Shut up! You shall go if you behave yourself.”

I seized him by the collar to drag him into the car. Crack. A shot from Sam at the window. A yell from the poor wretch who had ventured to put his head through.

“No, no! Don’t trust him! No!” shrieked Alice.

Crack! Sam did it again. Bang! With a thunderous report a mool ball struck the rocks close alongside the balloon.

“Cut loose!” I shouted. “Alice, I can’t resist his appeal.”

Now all this happened in the same second, so to speak. The next was just as exciting, even more so. For the instant Rumjudee Jam got his feet on the car he turned on me.

“Look out!” yelled Sam.

“You fiend!” I cried, flinging him back upon the stone floor.

You see, he had a knife up his sleeve. In an instant he would have thrust it into my heart.

“Three we are, and three we shall remain!” yelled Sam. Slash! went the knife. From one rope to the other it flew like lightning. Bang! Another mool ball struck the rock. The Chi-um men were swarming through the window. Rumjudee Jam, with fearful imprecations, was picking himself up off the stone floor. I held my breath. We were rising! But if a mool ball struck the balloon we were done for. I saw their arms go up. Each hand grasped its deadly missile. Too late! As though it had known—had been alive—the balloon seemed to give a leap upward and outward. Presto! No. 10 and its dangers vanished from our sight. I saw the mool ball fly out harmlessly beneath us, but we were floating through the air. Saved? Perhaps. Who could tell? At last our lucky number still held. “Three.”

CHAPTER XIX.—Conclusion.

“Saved!”

Thus shouted Sam. We were floating above the mysterious city of Chi-um. Never was there a balloon which worked better. We were up perhaps the quarter of a mile. This, with not a cloud in the sky, was just the same as being in the city. It was the first time Sam had spoken, for truth told we found the balloon utterly unmanageable, until——

Well, I may as well own up. We couldn’t work it. Alice was at the valve rope. She was work-

ing the balloon. I never doubted from the first moment I saw her take the rope that she knew just what she was about. And to my added amazement she took a curious-looking arrangement—a big sheet of muslin stretched on bamboo—out from under the seat and fastened it outside the car. It acted as a rudder. She controlled it by means of a rope and knew just how to do it and it worked first-rate. I looked down upon the city. Hopeless ruin lay everywhere. The buildings had been shaken down in all directions, and some of them were burning. Armed bands of men were rioting in the smoky streets. Shouts and wild yells greeted us as we passed over. It was a time of anarchy, riot and ruin. I don’t think they could distinguish our figures clearly enough to recognize us. I even doubt if those rioters knew who we were, but like enough they guessed. And we sailed away over my mysterious city, and saw it no more. On we flew over the desert, heading south, carried by the wind, controlled in part by the rudder, which Alice declared was her father’s own invention.

Occasionally we passed over bands of Tekke-Turcomans, who speeded their horses over the desert beneath us, discharging their long Arabian guns and shouting madly. Once we passed a caravan, heading doubtless for Samarcand. Sundown came. We were ascending. Alas for our golden dishes. They were all gone. Alice had ordered it, and we knew it was necessary. Below us lay desert no longer. We were crossing the Hindoo-Koosh mountains. Snow-clad peaks were all about us. Far, far below lay a vast stretch of ice, sloping down on the Afghanistan side. It was a glacier. A drop here meant a drop to death. We were heading for Kabul, where Alice assured us she was known and we would find friends.

“Strange!” I thought. “All this don’t harmonize with Captain Manning’s pretty story.”

Rumjudee Jam may have been in love with Alice, but this is not her first, not yet her second, trip by balloon over these desert wilds. You see, she showed it in a hundred ways. I knew it must be so—and it was. All that night over the mountains at an altitude of as much as two miles, and even then snowy peaks towered above us. Morning came at last. Still we were floating over the mountains, but it was different. They were mere babies, these hills of Afghanistan, compared with the mighty peaks of the Hindoo Koosh. Sunrise came, but we did not see it. Now the sky was overcast, and the wind beginning to rise in the most alarming manner. I had relieved Alice an hour before, and she was quietly sleeping. Suddenly a gust struck the balloon, and our air-ship

began a series of wild gyrations. I looked at Sam inquiringly, and he read my thoughts.

"You'll have to wake her, Phil. There's going to be fun in a few minutes, you can bet!"

Ten minutes later we were in the thick of it. Rain! I never saw its equal! Wind! Well, I should not dare to say the rate at which we were being blown along. And the blackness of the blackest night was daylight compared with the gloom by which we were surrounded now. But Alice was at the ropes, and as cool as an iceberg, for which reason we felt comparatively safe. For fully twenty minutes this continued. Suddenly a thunderous report, and then— Why, then, came chaos. Whirling down, down, down—ever down. And with it all came those huge hailstones rattling all around us—those fatal stones which had penetrated our balloon. Sam held on to the car in brave silence. I would have taken Alice in my arms, but she rejected me.

"Hold the anchor ready, Phil Winters!" she cried. "Don't try to hold me."

She was bending over the car watching. She seemed able to see where we could not.

"Now!" she shouted.

At last came the cry. I flung over the anchor. It caught something—it held.

"Jump!" cried Alice.

I saw her go. I saw Sam go. I jumped! I struck something with my unfortunate head, and then I knew nothing. Nothing, that is, until my senses returned. The storm had passed. We were standing beside a tree on the top of a hill. Alice was there—Sam was at my side. A city lay at our feet.

"Kabul!" she quietly said, pointing. "I have many friends here, Phil Winters. Our troubles are over now."

"But the balloon!" I cried.

"Gone!" she answered. "It only held a minute—just long enough for us to get out."

"And the diamonds—great Godfrey—the diamonds!"

"Well, I got three in my pocket, Phil," said Sam. "As for the rest, they've gone, the dear knows where—with the balloon."

New York! Time, two months later. We were there. This is no love story. There's nothing more to be said except to mention that Alice Manning is now Mrs. Phil Winters. We were married in Calcutta, which city we reached with little or no trouble. Alice had no friends to object, so we came right home. And now for something of my wife's secret. It must be told or the story would not be complete. As the names

I have given are not our own, we can never be traced, and the Russians are just as good as the English here.

Captain Manning was a spy. So was Rumjidee Jam. I regret to add, so was Mrs. Winters. But it was not just as my late father-in-law put it to me. They had sold out to the Russians. Captain Manning was not straight—I hate to own it, but it must be told. Sam's three diamonds made him comparatively richer. I confess now that I have more money than Sam, and have quit reporting long ago. How did I get it? Well, I gave Sam a big slice, so I'm straight on that score. I made it by selling diamonds. I had a pocket full. I brought them away from the tenth treasure house of the Tartar King. So you see we are still friends. We keep our secrets and mind our own business. We consider it a lucky number, and admit no one into our little circle. We are "3."

Next week's issue will contain "RAILROAD ROB; OR, THE TRAIN WRECKERS OF THE WEST."

A TALKING CLOCK

Philadelphia has a talking clock. Instead of striking the hours and half hours, it speaks them right out.

"Time to get up, time to get up!" shouts the clock at 6 A. M., and Mrs. Vincent Pinto and her daughter Rose hustle out of bed at their home, No. 1624 South Eighth Street, dress and begin to get breakfast.

"Breakfast is ready," warns the clock an hour later, and Mr. Vincent Pinto and his son Joseph hurry downstairs to the table, where mother and daughter have breakfast ready.

"Time to go to work!" the clock soon warns Mr. Pinto and his son, and at 9 it informs Mrs. Pinto it's the hour to do her marketing.

And so through the day the clock speaks, finishing its work at 11 P. M., when Mr. Pinto's voice, deep and stern, can be heard saying: "Time to go home, young man; it's eleven o'clock. Time to go home!"

The clock is an invention of Mr. Pinto. In appearance like a grandfather's clock, it has a phonograph attachment which does the talking. Mr. Pinto has made his own records, and he can change the clock's remarks to fit any occasion and his mental attitude. Mr. Pinto says the idea came to him when one of his son's companions told him about his mother, who couldn't see to tell the time and easily lost count of the strokes.

"I think she ought to have a talking clock," the young man said, and Pinto went ahead.

CURRENT NEWS

TO CATCH RUM RUNNERS

Collector of Customs A. T. Montreuil, Windsor, Ontario, following reports made to his office that a number of small craft from the American side, believed to be engaged in rum running, are operating at night on the Canadian shore without lights and without permission, are landing parties, has ordered a special patrol of the Canadian river front.

Mr. Montreuil characterized the small boats and launches so operating as a serious menace to river navigation, and declared that the licenses of such boats should be cancelled. Failure to comply with the customs regulations means a fine of \$500 or confiscation of the boat, or both.

ELEPHANTS ONLY BEASTS THAT ACTUALLY BATHE.

Elephants are the only beasts that deliberately wash themselves in water. Female African elephants have been seen to daub their calves with mud and then wash it off, apparently soaping and sluicing their young.

Most naked skin animals love to wallow in water or mud and water, and some furred animals also do. Such bathing is enjoyed by the rhinoceros and buffalo, bears, tigers and dogs. But this wallowing is not bathing. Indeed, the animals are sometimes dirtier afterward than before.

Some animals, such as cats and mice, do all their bathing by licking. Game birds favor a roll in sand, although some keep their coats sleek without either dry or wet cleaning.

Birds appear to be the chief water washers. Some of them prefer shower baths, such as are possible during rain storms, and they enter into their bath with great glee. Some delight in dust baths, while some few, like the sparrow, employ both dust and water.

GIRL SLAYER HEROINE

Forced to fly from Philadelphia in the United States, where he had been the ringleader of a criminal gang, Francesco Di Cicco returned to his native Philadelphia, in Calabria, where he set up business among the credulous country folk as a prophet and wonder worker.

In a short time the white-bearded charlatan, to whom thousands of women resorted for his exercise of supposed magical arts, amassed a small fortune.

Recently a young girl whom he had wronged when he was under hypnotic influence stole back to his cavern with a scythe, killed him and hacked the importer's body to pieces. Finding it impossible to obtain an emigrant's passport, the girl gave herself up to the police.

While the local magistrates were assembled for a preliminary hearing of the case a big pilgrimage of the hoaxed penitents, headed by the town band, besieged the law court, demanding the immediate release of the murderess.

On her exit from court repeated but unsuccessful attempts were made to rescue the girl from the grip of the carabinieri escorting her.

The crowd then insisted upon accompanying the heroine as far as the prison gates, amid enthusiastic cheering and singing.

The peasant children scattered roses along her path, and at eventide a grand fireworks display at public expense was given in her honor.

LIQUOR SMUGGING ON GIGANTIC SCALE

In commenting upon the recent seizure of a small yacht and 140 cases of liquor at Mayport by Duval County deputies, which the authorities believe was brought into Mayport from a whisky laden vessel lying outside the three-mile limit, "The Palm Beach Post" prints an interesting article outlining purported methods used by liquor runners in smuggling whisky into the United States from the Bahamas.

The article in part is as follows:

"In this connection it is learned that one of the strongest organizations of liquor runners has lately been perfected, on a plan of operation quite different than anything heard of before in the transportation of contraband. The system is using three good-sized boats of varying size and tonnage, two of them equipped with engines capable of developing 300 horsepower and making fast time.

"These boats are used, it is intimated, to transport the liquor to a point just outside the three-mile zone, outside of which they are considered on the high seas as immune from boarding parties or inspection, in point of international law. The method of distribution is arranged from parent ships, the three ships mentioned, and small power boats unload the liquor from these ships under cover of darkness at designated points off shore, virtually buying their loads from the ships, instead of these small boats making the long and dangerous run to the Bahamas and back.

"In other words, at an advance of a dollar or two a quart over the price charged in the Bahamas, the liquor runners affiliated with the system can procure their cargoes three miles out to sea, under cover of darkness, and reducing the risks of seizure to a minimum, saving the time consumed in making the round trip by small boat and the considerable expense of oil and gasoline.

"The prevailing price of liquor along the East Coast is to-day about \$15 a quart. The whisky seized at Mayport represented a money value of approximately \$25,000, so that on a large scale the fortune in successfully evading officers creates the greatest kind of a temptation.

"All kinds of deception are used to escape detection. Sometimes these ships, it is said, utilized the flags of foreign nations to conceal their identity and mission, in the effort to make it appear that they are from the other side of the Atlantic.

"The prohibition enforcement department of the United States Government, Southern district, has asked for the use of several fast cruising boats of high power to patrol the waters between the Bahamas and the coasts of Florida, in an effort to break up the system."

CHARLIE CHAPMAN'S COURAGE

—OR—

THE BOY WHO TOOK CARE OF HIS MOTHER

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER III.

A Bitter Surprise for Charlie.

"Not a day, until I can pay off the debts here, and go with an easy mind and a fat purse. And I'll bet you right now, judge, my little pony against that fast mare of yours, that I will pay the mortgage off by the end of the time first put down—that is by next November."

The judge laughed merrily.

"Why, boy, that is impossible, for it's April now," said he. "But I'll just take you, because you are game enough to mean it and to do it."

The judge and the schoolmaster rode back to Fernbank very thoughtfully.

"By jingo," muttered the judge. "He's a young rascal, that's what he is."

Professor Burton spoke up in astonishment.

"Why, judge, I don't understand your calling such a manly lad a rascal?" he began in amazement.

The other man chuckled merrily.

"Friend, you didn't understand. I was just thinking aloud, and I really approve highly of the young rascal—that's the sort of a rogue I meant. I thought all such boys were out of style these days. I was afraid that the kind of young fellows I used to know about had somehow or other dwindled away."

"Well, they haven't as yet," said the school teacher. "In my work I have come across many a humble hero whose bravery and noble work were never put into magazine articles or newspaper headlines. Yet they were heroes just the same."

"Correct," said the judge. "But I am glad that Widow Chapman is so fortunate as to have such a manly son. Get up there, girl."

He looked admiringly and proudly at his beautiful mare, and turned to Burton with a curious smile on his kindly features.

"Blessed if I don't kind of hope he will win his bet. You know I would take that pony of his, and would manage to get it back to him somehow. But, much as I love this little mare of mine, I'd enjoy seeing such a prize winner go into the hands of a worthy youngster."

He was in front of his own fine house before long, and the genial judge insisted on having the teacher take supper with him.

The reader can well guess that the judge was a gentleman of the old school, who had higher ideals than mere money getting, and yet whose brains had won for him a comfortable fortune.

All his money would some day go to his daugh-

ter, Frances, and the judge had noticed with concealed but none the less hearty approval, that there was more than a likelihood of that money being managed by the astute young Charlie Chapman.

The judge, being a wise old man, kept his ideas discreetly to himself. He even laughed at his wife's opposition to any such plan, for he knew full well that the little, almost unnoticeable opposition from her mother would arouse the inherent girlish obstinacy.

And the judge was right.

For Frances Cromley grew to care more and more for Charlie Chapman, just as her mother attempted to turn her attention to other and wealthier boys.

But meanwhile Charlie was not aware of how things were shaping themselves for him in the village of Fernbank.

He had new troubles to cause him much sleeplessness.

The very day after the judge's kindly call, on which Charlie had renounced his ambitions, two different callers came to see the Chapmans, mother and son.

Charlie was doing some chores for his weak mother, when two strangers came up the lane, under the poplar trees, which were just beginning to show their early buds.

"Are you Charles Chapman?" asked the first man, with a sharp look about him, at the rolling farm land, and the well-kept farmhouse.

"That's my name, sir. What can I do for you?" asked Charlie, politely, as he stopped to greet the men.

"Well, your father died, and I suppose you are settling his estate," said one of the men.

"There is not much settling to do," said Charlie, quietly. "He willed his property as he saw fit, but that does not concern strangers, and you will kindly excuse me if I decline to talk about the matter."

The first speaker promptly replied, as if eager for such an opening:

"Well, it does concern us. This gentleman has a promissory note for one thousand dollars, signed by your father. And we want payment right away or there will be trouble."

"Oh, ho," muttered Charlie, in quiet astonishment. "So you hold my father's note, do you? And who indorsed it?"

"I did not get an indorsement," said the second man. "I believed him an honest man. But I see that I have a hard customer to deal with in you. Take my advice, young man, and don't you try any crooked business with this matter, but pay it at once before I expose the matter to the whole neighborhood by bringing it into the courts."

Charlie looked the man over coolly. His glance traveled from head to foot, as he took in every detail. The two men were utter strangers to him.

"Well, Mr. Man, you have a very peculiar way of jumping at conclusions," said Charlie Chapman, calmly. "I did not say that I would evade any honest debt. But I want to know what right you have to demand any such sum. Let me see the note?"

(To be continued)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

BUTTED INTO PIGSTY

While gazing with pride at his pen of fast-fattening hogs and dreaming fond dreams of juicy hams during the coming winter season, Gustav Stoney of near Montgomeryville, Pa., was awakened from his reverie when a goat butted him over the rail of the pigsty among the pigs. The porkers crawled all over him and Stoney and the pigs gave vent to a medley of grunts, squeals and yells. Finally Stoney's son came to his father's rescue. He chased off the pigs and Stoney, the elder, emerged from the pigsty. He was cut and bruised.

PRINTING ON WALL PAPER

The Hammond Vindicator, official journal for the Parish of Tangipahoa, City of Hammond and Town of Pontchatoula, constituting the strawberry section of Louisiana, is being printed on wall paper. And it does not in the least resemble the wall paper printed sheets of the Civil War period. When Editor Campbell of the Vindicator felt the newsprint shortage he contracted with a manufacturer of wall paper at Atlanta for a large tonnage of a very light shade of wall paper at 4 cents a pound cheaper than newsprint.

RATS COST PORTO RICO ANNUALLY \$15,000,000

Porto Rico has a rat population of 2,500,000—two to each inhabitant—and it costs the island \$15,000,000 annually to support them. This is the estimate of Maj. G. M. Corput of the United States Public Health Service, chief quarantine officer for Porto Rico.

Each rat, Major Corput says, eats food or damages crops and property worth \$6 every month.

The recent census gave Porto Rico a population of approximately 1,300,000. On this basis each man, woman or child in the island contributes about \$11 annually to support rats.

BOY RIDES ON BIG CATFISH

A camping party from Macon, Mo., hooked a 48-pound catfish on the Charlton River, above the old Indian ford. The boys weren't looking for anything more than a two or three pounder, but suddenly one of the lines tightened and ripples started across the stream. Harvey Varnes shed his clothes, jumped in and lit on the fish's back. Then he took a half-mile trip downstream at airplane speed. The other boys joined in the race and headed off the fish just in time to prevent it jumping over the dam. For a while the fish floundered about like a horse, sending spray high in the air. It took two hours to land the monster.

PROHIBITION MAKES A NEW COUNTERFEITING INDUSTRY

A new counterfeiting industry has followed in the wake of Prohibition.

"This industry," says Chief Moran of the

Treasury Secret Service, "is the counterfeiting of the strip label revenue stamp that goes over the corks or that used to go over the corks of whisky bottled in bond. Those engaged in the manufacture of whisky are prepared to use those counterfeit stamps and we have arrested three gangs already for doing it."

At present the main problems of the Secret Service, however, are to check note raising, which Chief Moran says has increased to an "alarming extent" in the last year, and the forgery of Government checks, which, he adds, "has become almost an epidemic."

Records of the Secret Service show according to Mr. Moran, more arrests and investigations during the last year than for any similar preceding period.

DESCENT AT 450 MILES PER HOUR

Lieut. Weiss of the French Army was attempting to establish a height record recently but unexpectedly found his supply of oxygen virtually exhausted. The Paris correspondent of the Morning Post states that at the moment he was at 8,000 meters and his only chance of safety was to nose dive. For a certain number of seconds he achieved a speed of 450 miles per hour and actually traversed 4,300 yards of descent in 30 seconds. The machine was injured as a result of the strain and certain portions of the wings were torn off, while some supports also were broken before he was able to flatten out the machine for landing.

CLEANING REVOLVER, BOY KILLS MOTHER

Mrs. Albert Pekary of Sunnyside Avenue, Bergenfield, N. J., was killed instantly in the kitchen of her home the other afternoon when a revolver being cleaned by her twelve-year-old son Albert was discharged accidentally.

The lad had found his father's weapon and had taken it to clean in the kitchen, where his mother was preparing the evening meal. He removed all the cartridges from the cylinder but one, which he overlooked. When he had finished cleaning the weapon he pointed it at his mother playfully and pulled the trigger.

The bullet penetrated Mrs. Pekary's forehead and she fell dead. Hysterical from fright, the little fellow ran and hid in the woods near his home.

Policeman Kiel, who was passing, heard the shot and ran into the house. He summoned Dr. Grimes, who said death had been instantaneous.

Neighbors also had heard the shot and had seen the boy run away. Policeman Kiel found him and took him to the office of Under Sheriff Jack L. Fox, where he told of the accident.

He was committed temporarily to jail by Justice MacKay. The lad's father, Albert Pekary, an employee of the American Express Company in this city, was prostrated on returning home from work.

THE FATAL HAND

By HORACE APPLETON

I was at one time police magistrate in Ajaccio—a little white city which sleeps at the edge of an admirable gulf, shut in by lofty mountains.

The cases I had to investigate or prosecute there were mostly cases of vendetta.

In Corsica there are all sorts of vendettas—superb and dramatic as possible—some ferocious, others heroic.

Well, one day I was told that an Englishman had just leased for several years in advance a little country house that stood at the innermost point of the gulf.

He had brought with him a French servant, whom he hired at Marseilles on his way to Corsica.

In a short time everybody was talking about this strange person, who lived by himself, never leaving his house except to hunt or fish.

All kinds of stories began to circulate about him.

Some said he was a very distinguished nobleman, who had left his country for political reasons.

Others said he was trying to hide himself because he had committed some terrible crime.

In my capacity of police-magistrate I thought it necessary to try and obtain some particulars about the man; but I found it impossible to get any information.

He called himself Sir John Rowell.

I contended myself, therefore, with having close watch set over him; but none of my men could find anything very suspicious in his actions.

After a time, as the queer rumors about him continued and increased and became general, I resolved to see the stranger for myself, and I made a point of going out hunting every day in the neighborhood of his place.

I had to wait a long time for a chance.

It came at last in the shape of a partridge which I brought down under the very nose of my Englishman.

My dog brought it to me; but taking the bird in my hand, I went to Sir John Rowell, to excuse myself and beg him to accept the game.

He was a very tall man, with red hair and a red beard—very tall, indeed, and also very broad—a sort of placid and polite Hercules.

During the following month we had five or six meetings and brief conversations.

One evening at last, as I was passing by his gate, I saw him in the garden bestraddling a chair, and smoking a briar pipe.

I saluted him, and he invited me in to take a glass of ale.

I was only too glad to accept.

He received me with all the minute English courtesy possible, and spoke warmly of France and of Corsica, declaring that he loved the country and the gulf shore.

Then, with the greatest precaution, I began to question him—disguising my object under the mask of a warm personal interest—about his life and his projects.

He replied without the least embarrassment,

and told me that he had traveled a great deal—in Africa, in India, in America.

He added, laughingly, in bad French:

"Adventures? Yes, I have had plenty of adventures. Oh, yes."

I turned the conversation upon hunting, and he began to give me the most curious facts about hippopotamus hunting and tiger hunting and elephant hunting, and even gorilla hunting.

I said:

"But all those are terribly dangerous animals."

He smiled and said:

"Oh, no—the worst of all is Man!"

Then he burst into a laugh—a big hearty, self-satisfied English laugh, and observed:

"I have done a good deal of Man-hunting, too, in my time."

Then he began to talk about weapons, and invited me into a room to show me his firearms, and explain the difference in their mechanism.

His parlor was all hung in black—black silk embroidered in gold.

Huge bright-yellow flowers blossomed all over the sable texture—shining like fire.

"That," he observed, "is Japanese work."

But in the center of the largest panel there was a strange thing which caught my eye—a black object relieved against a square of red velvet.

I approached it.

It was a hand—a man's hand.

Round the wrist an enormous chain of iron had been riven about the foul relic; and this chain fastened the hand to the wall by a great ring, solid enough to hold an elephant in leash.

I asked:

"What is that?"

The Englishman tranquilly answered:

"That was part of my best enemy. It is from America. It was cut off with a saber, and the skin removed with a sharp stone—after which it was dried in the sun for eight days. That was a good thing for me, I tell you!"

I touched that fragment of human wreck, which seemed to have belonged to a colossus.

The fingers extraordinarily long, were attached to enormous tendons, still held in their places here and there by strips of skin.

I said:

"That man must have been very strong."

The Englishman answered gently:

"Oh, yes; but I was stronger than he. I put this chain on the hand to hold it."

"But the chain is no use now. The hand can't get away."

"That hand always tries to get away. The chain is necessary."

I turned the conversation to another subject, and began to look at the rifles.

Meanwhile I observed that three loaded revolvers were lying upon different articles of furniture—as if the man was living in perpetual fear of being attacked.

I went to see him two or three times afterward.

Then I did not go any more.

People had become accustomed to his presence, and he was absolutely indifferent to the rest of the world.

A whole year passed.

Then, one morning, about the end of Novem-

ber, my servant woke me up with the news that Sir John Rowell had been murdered during the night.

Half an hour later I entered the Englishman's house, with the central commissary and the captain of the gendarmes.

The French valet was weeping at the door, terrified and unconsolable.

I at first suspected him, but the man subsequently proved to be innocent.

The real murderer was never known.

The first sight that met my eyes on entering the parlor was the corpse of Sir John Rowell, lying on its back in the middle of the room.

His vest was torn, one shirt-sleeve, half pulled off was hanging down—everything indicated that an awful struggle had taken place.

The Englishman had been strangled to death! His blackened and swollen face, frightfully distorted wore an expression of hideous fear; between his clenched teeth was a bit of something or other, which I could not tell the nature of at first; and his throat, pierced with five wounds that seemed to have been made by points of iron, was covered with blood.

A doctor joined us.

He examined the marks of the fingers in the flesh for a long time, and then uttered these strange words:

"Why, the man looks as if he had been strangled by a skeleton!"

I felt a creeping sensation, and involuntarily lifted my eyes to the wall—to the place where the horrible flayed hand used to be.

It was no longer there.

The chain—broken—was dangling from the ring.

Then I bent over the dead man, and between his clenched teeth I found one of the fingers of the vanished hand—severed, or rather sawed off by the teeth, about the middle of the second joint.

Then we proceeded to take testimony.

We could not find out anything at all.

No door had been broken in—no window, no partition.

Even the two watchdogs had never been awakened.

The testimony of the servant was in substance about as follows:

For a month previously his master had seemed to be very much worried about something.

He had received a great many letters, which he burned as soon as he had read them.

Frequently he would fly into a rage that seemed like madness, and taking a whip, would lash the dried hand furiously—the same hand that had been removed from its place on the wall in some mysterious way at the time of the murder.

Sir John used to go to bed very late, and always locked himself in carefully. He never slept without having pistols or loaded revolvers within arm's reach. Often in the night, he used to shout out very loud, as if he was quarreling with somebody.

That night, by some singular chance, he had made no noise at all, and the valet had only found that Sir John was murdered when he went to open the windows next morning.

He did not know whom to suspect.

I communicated all the information I possessed

concerning the man to the other magistrates and police officials, and the most rigorous search was made in all parts of the island.

Nothing whatever was discovered.

Now one night—three months after the crime—I had a hideous nightmare.

I thought I saw the hand—the horrible hand—running like a scorpion or a spider along the curtain and up and down the walls of my room.

Three times I woke up—three times I went to sleep again—three times I saw the ghastly thing running all over my room, and using its fingers like so many legs.

Next day they brought me the hand itself—saying they had found it in the cemetery, and on the tomb of Sir John Rowell, who had been buried there; for we never could find the address of his family.

The index finger was wanting.

That is my story, ladies, and that is all I know about it.

All the women had turned pale; some shuddered visibly. One cried out:

"But that is no ending of a story; there is no explanation. We shall not be able to sleep to-night if you do not tell us what really happened—or, at least, what you think really happened."

The magistrate smiled austere.

"Oh as for my opinion, ladies, it will certainly dissipate your terrible fancies. I merely suppose that the legitimate proprietor of that hand was not dead, and had come back with his other hand to look for it. But how he managed to fulfill his purpose is something, I must acknowledge which I have never been able to surmise. It was, of course, a sort of vendetta."

One of the women murmured:

"No; it could never be."

The police judge, still smiling, observed:

"I told you so. I knew that my explanation would not satisfy you."

WORLD'S BEST SAILORS SAN BLAS INDIANS

The San Blas Indians occupy the coast and the adjacent islands near the Colombian border, and are among the best natural sailors in the world, many of them going to sea on ships from the Panama Canal.

Their coast and islands are said to produce the best cocoanuts in the world. These natural seamen bring large loads of cocoanuts to Cristobal, piled high in their dugout sailboat, up the roughest bit of coast on the Caribbean, with the waves laying over the edge, and never lose a nut.

Their blood is probably the purest of any of the American Indians, as no men in the world have guarded their women with more jealousy and efficiency than the San Blas.

In a country everywhere touched with the blood of the West Indian negroes, the San Blas never show the slightest trace of any kind of mixture.

Until years ago, and it is still often true, no man other than those of their own tribe were permitted to be ashore on their coasts or on their islands after sunset.

Courtship in the San Blas is a strenuous matter, especially for the bride-to-be. To win her the suitor must chase her and catch her in the water.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 1, 1920.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

RETURNS LOOT

One of the most unusual safe robberies in police annals in Mercer County, Pa., has come to light. A robber forced his way into the store of Nicholas Lobinski. He worked the combination of the safe and stole \$170 in bills. Leaving the store by a rear door, his conscience evidently troubled him, for he wrapped the money around an empty catsup bottle, securely bound it with a wire and threw it through an upstairs window into the room where Lobinski and his wife were sleeping. They were awakened by the crash of glass and found the money on the floor.

PRISONER RETURNED

The "honor system," recently installed at the New Castle, Del., County Workhouse, stood a crucial test lately. Warden M. S. Plummer, firm believer in the human system as applied to prisons, permitted Stephen Thornton, serving an indefinite sentence, to come to this city unescorted to attend the funeral of his mother, Mrs. Anna Ray.

Every precaution was taken to see that Thornton was given complete freedom while attending the services and later at the cemetery.

After his mother's body had been interred, the prisoner boarded a trolley car and returned to the workhouse.

DESERT GOLD FIELDS TO SEEK RUM

Rumors that ten casks of rum, 150 years old, are buried near Cumberland House, an old Hudson's Bay Company fur post famous in early history, have caused more excitement than the gold strike at Athapupusko Lake. Many prospectors have deferred their hunt for yellow metal to search for this liquid treasure.

French wood runners and trappers in the employ of the Northwest Company, then the great rival of the Hudson's Bay Company, visited Cumberland House on their way toward the Athabasca region in the latter part of the eighteenth century. They had with them the casks of rum to be used in trading with the Indians for furs.

The Hudson's Bay Company claimed exclusive trapping rights in the country and disapproved the use of liquor in bartering with the natives. The Hudson's Bay Company men blocked the passage of the French voyageurs through the

territory and turned them back. Before they began their retreat, the Frenchmen buried their rum. They finally reached Fort Garry, now Winnipeg.

Their diary of their adventurous journey was found recently, and it told of the burial of the liquor. It did not indicate, however, the exact spot at which the cache was made.

Though the old empire of the Hudson's Bay Company has vanished and the company is now closing out its last remaining lands to colonists, Cumberland House is still a flourishing fur post and ships our immense quantities of peltries annually.

LAUGHS

Tattered Tim—"I've been trampin' four years, ma'am, an' it's all 'cause I heard the doctors recommended walkin' as the best exercise." Mrs. Prim—"Well, the doctors are right. Walk right along."

Mother—"I really think you'd be happier if you married a man who had less money." Daughter—"Don't worry, mother; he will have less in a very short time."

Prison Visitor—"You are well treated here, are you not?" Convict—"No, I ain't." Prison Visitor—"I am surprised. Tell me what you wish the prison authorities to do for your comfort." "Lemme out."

Mrs. Fontpue (to minister's wife)—"Why is your husband always asking for money, money, money?" Minister's Wife (wearily)—"I presume it's because he never gets any."

"Did you try counting sheep for your insomnia?" "Yes, doctor, but I made a mess of it. I counted ten thousand sheep, put 'em on the cars, and shipped 'em to market. The wad of money I got for 'em made me afraid to go to sleep."

A grocer's boy hailed a vessel at the dock. The surly mate gruffly asked him what he wanted. "I've got some vegetables for the ship," was the reply. "All right, you needn't come aboard; throw them up one at a time," said the mate, as he stood ready to receive the expected vegetables. "Ahoy, there, look out!" shouted the lad as he threw a small dried pea toward the mate; "I've got a sack of these."

Olie James, the big Representative from Kentucky, tells of an Irishman in the West who had intended to take up a homestead claim, but not knowing how to go about it, sought information from a friend. "Malachi," he said, "you know all about this law. Tell me what I am to do." "Well," said the other, "I don't remember the exact wording of the law, but I can give you the meaning of it. It's this: The government is willin' to bet you 160 acres of land against \$14 that you can't live on it five years without starvin' to death."

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

PRICE OF LEGS ADVANCES

Dr. Amos Osborne Squire, head physician of Sing Sing, returned to the prison the other day from hunting for bargains in wooden legs.

Dr. Squire was authorized by Warden Lawes to fit Isadore Berman a crippled prisoner, with an artificial leg. Berman went to Sing Sing on crutches, but the prison officials, as a matter of thrift, are going to have the State buy him a leg so he can earn his board. Dr. Squire was told he could spend \$75 for one for Berman, but he found he would have to pay \$125 to \$150 for one. The prison officials are trying to determine where to get the \$50 additional.

SMALL GIRLS' FIND

Two little girls sat on the river bank near Medford, Minn., the other day playing "store." One was the shopkeeper; the other was the shopper.

W. A. Bailey, postmaster of Owatonna, paused as he passed them. As the "shopper" bought a mud pie she gave her little shopkeeper chum a glittering piece of water-soaked paper. Bailey blinked and looked again. It was a \$1,000 bond.

The rest of the funds Bailey counted excitedly. They were \$100,000 worth. Inquiry revealed that they were among the loot from the Great Northern State Bank at St. Paul, held up and robbed by five armed men.

A pillow case had floated down the straight river near Medford, where the little girls were wading, they explained, and they towed it to shore. Inside, clogged with wet feathers, the bonds were found, a fat bundle of them. They were pretty, hence the game of "store."

BRITAIN STILL RULES ONE OF OUR SOUTH SEA ISLANDS.

The Philippine Government has renewed negotiations for control of the little Island of Baguan, only thirty miles northeast of British North Borneo, in the Sulu Sea. Although part of the Philippine group ceded by Spain to the United States in the Treaty of Paris, Baguan has remained under the control of the British North Borneo Government because of the proximity to that island.

Baguan, also known as Turtle Island on account of the great number of turtles there, is inhabited by Moros, who, Philippine officials assert, should be placed under the control of the Government of the Sulu Archipelago, the southernmost part of the Philippine group.

Sir Aylmer Pearson, Governor of British North Borneo, has been visiting at Baguio, the summer capital of the Philippines, and officials of the Insular Government hoped to complete the preliminary negotiations with him for taking control of Baguan, so that the matter might be presented to Washington for final adjustment in a short time.

The Island of Baguan is said to be the clearing house for a ring which smuggles large quantities of opium into the islands of the Sulu Archipelago, as well as into the Island of Mindanao. Officials believe this opium traffic can be broken up when

Baguan is brought under control of the Philippine Government.

NEW CROP OF MILLIONAIRES

West Virginia may have a new crop of millionaires in the near future unless Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer and his committee fix a maximum price for bituminous coal.

The price of a ton of coal varies from \$3.50 to \$14 in this district; probably the average on coal not sold under contract is close to \$8.50. The same coal went begging at prices of from \$2.25 to \$3 in the spring of 1919. The cost of mining coal is scarcely more than \$3 a ton in the most expensive mines. When a miner loads a fifty-ton car it can be seen that he should make at least \$250 if it is not sold under contract and if he is not afraid of being indicted. Of course some operators are tied up entirely by contracts and have had little spot coal. Others, rather than run the chance of indictment and unfavorable publicity are not selling their coal at more than \$5 a ton.

But still others are selling coal for what bidders are willing to pay, and some of them seem to be willing to pay high prices. For this reason, West Virginia will probably have a new crop of millionaires, much to the annoyance of the "First Families."

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PLUCK AND LUCK

GOOD READING

PLOUGHS UP MASTODON BONE

The lower jawbone of a mastodon was ploughed up recently by Isaiah Johnson, of Thorn Creek Township, six miles north of Columbia City, Ind., near Loon Lake. Mr. Johnson's plough struck two of the teeth which broke off. Johnson after unearthing the jawbone dug deeper in the hope of finding more bones, but discovered nothing. The jawbone is thirty inches long and twenty-six inches wide. The two teeth broken off are four inches long and four inches wide. There were three teeth on each side of the jawbone. The ivory on the teeth was a quarter of an inch thick. The bone and teeth were in an excellent state of preservation. They weighed nearly 175 pounds.

PAPER SUITS MAY BE VOGUE.

WASHINGTON, August 14.—Paper suits, much in vogue in Germany and Austria, soon will make their appearance in the United States, and if inquiries to the Department of Commerce can be taken as an indication of the probable demand, they may become even more popular in the lower-the-cost-of-living campaign than was the lowly overall a short time ago.

Cable orders for samples of the suits have been despatched by the Department of Commerce, it was announced the other day, and when the samples arrive they will be displayed not only in Washington but also in the department's district and cooperative offices in important cities of the country.

SCORN PAPER MONEY OF AUSTRIAN BANK

Only Americans of a generation ago who traded farm products at the crossroads store for everything from shoes to sugar can realize the extent of barter in Austria to-day. With the country flooded with cheap money, the peasants' stockings and bank accounts fat with currency, legislation impending for a compulsory levy on fortunes, the paper crown virtually is spurned by those who produce the necessities of life.

For eggs or butter, cheese or white flour, fat geese and ducks, pork products and all the things that the Austrian city dweller must do without, the peasants want something more valuable than the paper constantly turned out by the Austro-Hungarian Bank.

Prodigious offers of crowns fail where a linen shirt, silk stockings (even much darned), rugs, musical instruments, shoes and such things bring results. The story of how the bourgeois and poor nobility of Vienna have parted with their wardrobes and furniture, their pianos and carpets, for food has been often told. Now every one is getting back to first principles of trade.

Visiting a retired officer in his little country place the correspondent saw it work. The officer could not pay 500 crowns a pair for gloves for his wife and three daughters, but he had three roebuck hides from animals he had shot this season. He exchanged them for two dressed hides. The

village glover made them into gloves, taking in payment cider, mutton and some veal from the little farm.

Then came the problem of stockings, almost unpurchasable in Austria. There were 11 sheep grazing on the place. Sheared they yielded enough wool to exchange for yarn sufficient to knit the family hosiery for the coming winter.

The apple crop of this tiny estate has been mortgaged for grain to a neighbor who has no fruit and the miller will take his pay in toll. The host who entertained in the little cottage now his home, filled with American and English periodicals, once trod the quarter deck of his own cruiser. A uniform stripped of ornaments and recut in civilian style is his best suit.

SUGAR FROM SAWDUST

Get your sweet tooth ready, and then prepare to be disappointed. Sugar can be made from sawdust. Every sawmill's refuse heap is a mine of sweetness.

Now comes the sad part of the story. It's not the kind of sugar you know at all, but a different kind, that you cannot use to sweeten your coffee.

The announcement has been made that sugar in immense quantities can be made from sawdust. But this ray of hope in the days of 30 cents a pound sugar is a false alarm, for the sugar that is produced is not the table sugar, but is glucose, an entirely different substance, and not a chance is there of the sawdust pile relieving the famine in sugar.

This is the announcement of the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse in explanation of the recent announcements that sawdust contains sugar, the explanation being given by Dr. Louis E. Wise, professor of forest chemistry and an authority on the chemistry of wood. He says:

"An important sugar can be prepared from sawdust by hydrolysis with acid, but it must not be confused with the sugar of the breakfast table. This sugar, prepared from wood, is dextrose or glucose and is identical with the sugar obtained by acid treatment of starch. The sugar is not identical, however, with sucrose, commonly termed 'cane sugar' or 'beet sugar.' Glucose is, however, widely used commercially and is an important foodstuff. It is the principal component of corn syrups and the like, and has distinct nutritive value. As sucrose cannot be prepared from glucose, either commercially or in the laboratory, there is little prospect that such a synthesis will be an accomplished fact in the near future.

"The commercial production of glucose from sawdust or other sources probably merits thorough investigation. On the other hand, it should be clearly understood that glucose is not cane sugar, and that the term 'sugar' as commonly used by the layman refers to sucrose or cane sugar. There are many sugars. In fact, they comprise a most important group of organic compounds, and different species of trees have produced different sugars."

Gained 25 Lbs. in 2 Months

SINCE QUITTING

TOBACCO HABIT



HJALMAR NELSON (address on application), whose photo appears at the left, learned of my book and other information being given **FREE**, explaining how Tobacco Habit can be conquered by oneself, safely, speedily and completely. He obtained the information and reported a gain of 25 pounds, as well as

VICTORY IN THREE DAYS OVER SLAVERY TO TOBACCO HABIT

HERE are more letters—voluntary testimonials. Though they are a small fraction of the thousands and thousands that can be produced, they are sufficient to show you what may be expected after the **TOBACCO HABIT** is overcome within 72 hours by the simple Woods Method. **READ THESE!**

"While addicted to the tobacco habit every muscle and joint ached, and I had almost given up business. I was poor in health, weighing about 130 pounds. Now I am well, weigh 165 pounds, and can work every day. I have never wanted to chew or smoke since following the Woods method."—A. F. Shelton. (Full address on application.)

"I have no craving for tobacco; this I consider wonderful after having used a pipe for 35 years. I have gained 12 pounds in two months, which is very good at the age of 59 years. To say that the benefits far exceed my expectations is putting it mildly. Anyone in doubt can refer to me."—John Brodie. (Full address on application.)

"I had weighed as low as 128 pounds, never got over 135 while I used tobacco. Now I weigh 156 pounds. Everyone wants to know why I got so fleshy; I tell them to follow Edward J. Woods' method for overcoming tobacco and find out."—W. S. Morgan. (Full address on application.)

"May God bless you. I am feeling finer every day of my life—not like the same person. My appetite is better, and my stomach is all right. I can hold out in walking better, my voice is better and my heart is stronger."—Mrs. Mattie E. Stevenson. (Full address on application.)

"Have used tobacco in all forms (mostly chewing) for 15 years, using about a plug of tobacco a day. I began following your Method on a Friday noon and after that day the craving for tobacco was gone. I am always ready to praise you and the good work you are doing. I can also say that I have gained nine pounds in seven weeks, and feel like a new man."—Robert S. Brown. (Full address on application.)

"My husband hasn't smoked a single cigarette, and has no desire to smoke since following your method of quitting. He looks like a new man—the best I ever saw him. He gained seventeen pounds, and is feeling fine."—C. C. Rogers. (Full address on application.)

QUIT TOBACCO EASILY NOW!

STOP RUINING YOUR LIFE

Why continue to commit slow suicide, when you can live a really contented life, if you only get your body and nerves right? It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to rid oneself of tobacco by suddenly stopping with "will power"—don't do it.

The correct way is to eliminate nicotine poison from the system and genuinely overcome the craving.

Tobacco is poisonous and seriously injures the health in several ways, causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gas belching, gnawing or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach, constipation, headache, weak eyes, loss of vigor, red spots on skin, throat irritation, catarrh, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, melancholy, lung trouble, impure (poisoned) blood, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, bad teeth, foul breath, lassitude, lack of ambition, weakening and falling out of hair and many other disorders.

Overcome that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco or snuff.

Here is an opportunity to receive **FREE** a reliable treatise on the subject, containing interesting and valuable information that you should be glad to have. This book tells all about the renowned Three Days' Method by which Mr. Nelson, and thousands and thousands of others, saved themselves from the life-wrecking tobacco habit. The book on tobacco and snuff habit will be mailed **FREE TO YOU** in plain wrapper, postpaid. All you need do is

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BIG WAGES DON'T PAY

One hundred and forty-eight Swedes, among them thirty women and children, have arrived at Stockholm by steamship from Russia. Workmen in the party were unanimous in saying that it is impossible to live in Soviet Russia. Wages are extravagantly high, but will not buy necessary food and clothing.

The arrivals included a number of Swedish Bolshevik metal workers who, some months ago, set out for Russia amidst the cheers of friends. Some of their countrymen, they say, have been detained in Russia against their will.

The only food ration now distributed, the men report, is half a pound of bread. Fish, horse meat, sugar, butter, tea and other food can only be obtained through illegitimate trading at incredible prices. An income of a thousand rubles a day, one returned worker declared, would not be sufficient to avert hunger. Most industries have practically ceased, the great Putilow works closing months after vain attempts to keep going.

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IF YOU WANT to sell or exchange your property, write me. John J. Back, 173d St., Chippewa Falls, Wis.

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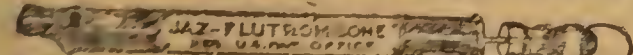
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